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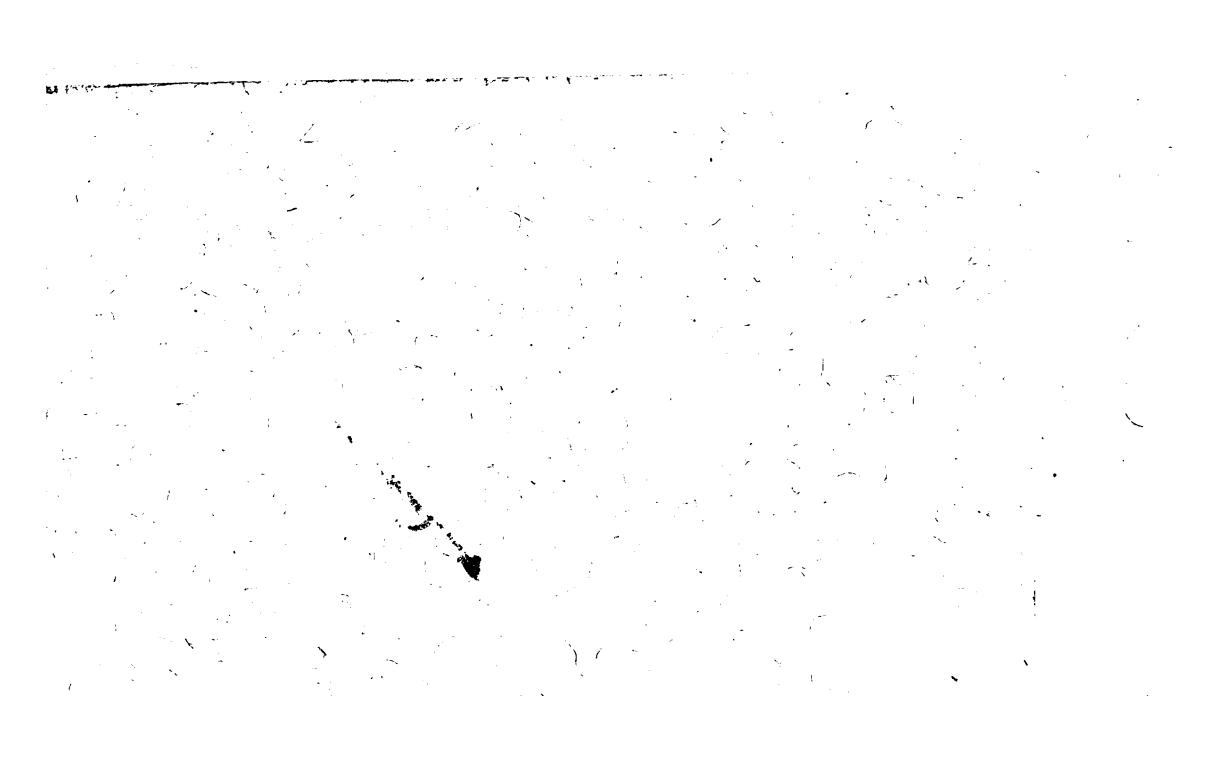

ANECDOTES

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ANECDOTES

OF

POLITE LITERATURE.

SECT. I.

Of PASTORAL POETRY.

SO many pens have been employed at different times on this popular ſubject, that my only buſineſs will be to explain the real and eſſential qualities of a paſtoral poem. A point concerning which moſt critics differ.

Few ſpecies of poetry have excited more writers than the paſtoral; but ſcarce any

of them deſerve to be ranked in a higher claſs of poets than bare imitators. The ſenſe of this univerſal pleaſure, ſays the Rambler, has invited *numbers without number* to try their ſkill in paſtoral performances, in which they have generally ſucceeded after the manner of other imitators, tranſmitting the ſame images in the ſame combination from one another, till he that reads the title of a poem may gueſs at the whole ſeries of the compoſition; nor will a man after the peruſal of thouſands of theſe performances, find his knowledge enlarged with a ſingle view of nature not produced before, or his imagination amuſed with any new application of thoſe views to moral purpoſes *.

The reaſon of this ſameneſs in paſtoral compoſitions is very evident; the ſpecies

* Rambler, vol. i. p. 198.

of

poetry will not admit ſo entertaining a range as many others. It is agreed by all critics that the ſcene of paſtorals ought to be in the country; and that all the imagery ſhould be rural *. But in moſt other points they differ in opinion. Some are of opinion that the paſtoral is an image of what they call *the golden age*, particularly Rapin, Fontenelle, Pope and Dryden †. But this notion has been ſince exploded as falſe, and is handled in a

* Vide Rapin's critical works, vol. ii. p. 225. Pope's works, vol. i. p. 4. ſmall edit. Guardian vol. i. Numb. 22. Rambler vol. i. p. 205. Dryden's Virgil, vol. i. p. 89.

† If we would copy nature, it may be uſeful to take this idea along with us, that paſtoral is an image of what they call *the golden age*, ſo that we are not to deſcribe our ſhepherds, as ſhepherds at this day really are; but as they may be conceived then to have been.

Pope's Diſcourſe on Paſtorals, p. 5.

maſterly manner by the Rambler in the 37th number. Rapin tells us, that the matter ſhould be low, and nothing great is in the genius of it, its buſineſs being only to deſcribe the little affairs of ſhepherds *. But this aſſertion is alſo founded in mere critical caprice. Whatſoever may, according to the common courſe of things happen in the country, may afford a proper ſubject for a paſtoral poet†. It has nothing peculiar but its confinement to rural imagery, without which it ceaſes to be paſtoral. This is its true characteriſtic, and this it cannot loſe by any dignity of ſentiments or beauty of

* Pope's Diſcourſe on Paſtorals, Vol. ii. p. 225.

† If we ſearch in the writings of Virgil for the true definition of a paſtoral, it will be found *a poem in which any action or paſſion is repreſented by its effects upon a country life.* Rambler, vol. i. p. 202.

diction.

diction. For this reaſon, the Pollio of Virgil is truly bucolic *.

As all ſorts of people inhabit the country, paſtoral admits every rank; nor are any ideas improper, but ſuch as owe not their original to rural objects. A young prince who loſes his way in hunting, and either by himſelf or with his friend talks of his paſſion, and borrows his images and compariſons from rural beauties, is an excellent perſonage for an idyllium †.

It is alſo a moſt abſurd notion among ſome paſtoral writers, that as they ſhould always have the low and deſpicable condition of a ſhepherd before them, their language

* Yet the generality of critics have rejected it.

† Reflexions critiques ſur la poeſie & peinture, par Du Bos, tom. i. ſect. 22.

ſhould be barbarous and ruſtic, and ſtuffed with obſolete terms, or that at leaſt it ſhould never riſe out of the plaineſt and ſimpleſt poetry; thus Spenſer begins one of his paſtorals,

Diggon Davie, I bid her good day:
Or Diggon her is, or I miſſay.
Dig. Her was her while it was day light,
But now her is a moſt wretched wight.

And Philips, in his homely ſtrains,

Oh woful day! O day of woe, quoth he,
And woful I, who live the day to ſee.

And again,

Ah me the while! ah me, the luckleſs day!
Ah luckleſs lad, the rather might I ſay;
Ah ſilly I! more ſilly than my ſheep,
Which on the flow'ry plains I once did keep.

The

The oppoſite fault to ſtudied ruſticity, is giving ſublime and lofty ideas to ſhepherds. It cannot be in character to aſſemble a parcel of ſhepherds to debate on the corruptions of the court of Rome, as ſhepherds have done; or to endow them with a knowledge, either of politics or mathematics. I have already obſerved, that all ranks of perſons may be introduced into a paſtoral with propriety: Now a poet may make a courtier talk in a courtly ſtrain, but the ſame language and ideas would be abſurd in a ſhepherd. For which reaſon I cannot approve of thoſe whining ſhepherds, who are made to ſay ſuch a deal of things ſo marvellouſly tender, and ſo ſublimely inſipid in ſome of our eclogues. Theſe pretended ſhepherds are neither copied nor imitated from nature; they

are a parcel of chimerical entities, and mere children of poets brains, who conſult only their own imagination in forging them. They bear no manner of reſemblance with our ruſtic inhabitants, and the ſhepherds of our times. Theſe are peaſants, whoſe ſole occupation is to procure themſelves, by the exerciſes of a laborious life, wherewithal to ſupply the preſſing neceſſities of an ever indigent family. Thus the languiſhing ſhepherds of our eclogues are not copied from nature; their kind of life, wherein they intermix the moſt delicate pleaſures with their rural cares, and eſpecially with the ſolicitude of feeding their tender flocks, is far from being the life of any of our peaſants †.

† Reflexions critiques ſur la Poeſie & Peinture, par Du Bos, tom. i. ſect. 22.

Theo-

Theocritus is allowed to excel all others in nature and ſimplicity ‡. He is the original, and Virgil little more than an elegant copy; but by means of the latter's judgment, he has in many places excelled his maſter. Among the Italians the famous Taſſo Bonarelli, Guarini, and Marino, have written paſtorals; but the firſt of theſe poets is thought far to ſurpaſs the reſt ‖. Luis de Gongora, and Camoens, have attempted the ſame in Spaniſh, but with little ſucceſs;

‡ Pope vol. i. p. 7.

‖ But the Italians are of opinion, that the Paſtor Fido of Guarini is equal to his Aminta. Taſſo himſelf, on reading it, cried out in a violent paſſion, *ſe non havuto viſto il mio Aminta.* Other nations have a different opinion of his merit; the paſtorals of Guarini, Bonarelli, and Marino, abounding with unnatural and forced epigrammatic turns, and crowded to the laſt degree with affected conceits and falſe glitter and ornament.

their

their idyllia, like thoſe of Ronſard in French, have nothing in them that is tender or delicate; thoſe of Fontenelle are too polite and refined in the ſentiment. His ſhepherds are all courtiers; and are better ſuited to the toilettes of Paris than the foreſt of Arcadia*. In our own language Spenſer, tho' extremely faulty in many particulars, wrote the beſt paſtoral that has appeared ſince the time of Virgil, according to the opinion of Mr. Dryden, who praiſes his Calendar highly. Pope ſays, that in his manners, thoughts, and characters, he comes near to Theocritus himſelf.

Mr. Pope's paſtorals have been criticiſed in ſo maſterly a manner by Mr. Warton, that I ſhall forbear to ſpeak particularly on him here. He has made

* Warton's Virgil, vol. i. p. 46.

his

his ſhepherds ſpeak a language too courtly for people in their ſituation, tho' not too refined for paſtoral, if it had been given to proper perſonages; but Mr. Pope was of opinion with other critics, that they were the only proper perſons to be introduced into an eclogue *.

The paſtorals of Mr. Gay are compoſed in too homely a ſtrain. The end of all poetry is to pleaſe the imagination;

* Upon the whole, the principal merit of the paſtorals of Pope, conſiſts in their correct and muſical verſification; muſical, to a degree of which rhyme could hardly be thought capable; and in giving the firſt ſpecimen of that harmony in Engliſh verſe, which is now become indiſpenſably neceſſary, and which has ſo forcibly and univerſally influenced the public ear, as to have rendered every moderate rhymer melodious. Pope lengthened the abruptneſs of Waller, and at the ſame time contracted the exuberance of Dryden. Eſſay on the writings and genius of Pope, p. 10.

but

but what pleaſure can we receive from an imitation of the language and ruſtic cuſtoms of ſhepherds, without being enlivened with any variety of incidents, or harmony of verſification? Five hundred ſuch lines as theſe,

I rue the day, a rueful day I trow,
The woful day, a day indeed of woe ‡!

will never pleaſe a reader of taſte, who expects ſomething even in paſtorals, beſides a barbarous ruſticity. One more inſtance of this woful ſimplicity, I muſt quote from Gay's paſtorals:

Ah woful day! ah woful noon and morn!
When firſt by thee my younglings white were ſhorn.

‡ Gay's poems, vol. i. p. 97.

Then

Then firſt, I ween, I caſt a lover's eye *,
My ſheep were filly, but more ſilly I.

Gay's

* Gay's poems, vol. i. p. 84. This poet was more celebrated for the Beggars Opera, a ſatire which was attended with amazing effects. He wrote it in an ill-humour, and being brought upon the ſtage in the beginning of November 1727, it was received with greater applauſe than had ever been known on any occaſion. For beſides being acted in London ſixty-three days, without interruption, and renewed the next ſeaſon with ſucceſs, it ſpread into all the great towns of England, was played in many places to the thirtieth and fortieth time; at Bath and Briſtol fifty, &c. It made its progreſs into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, where it was performed twenty-four days ſucceſſively; and laſtly, was acted in Minorca. The ladies carried about with them favourite ſongs of it in their fans, and houſes were furniſhed with it in ſcreens. The fame of it was not confined to the author only; the perſon who acted Polly, till then obſcure, being all at once the favourite of the town; her pictures were engraved, and ſold in great numbers; her life written; books of

letters

Gay's fables are poetic, and ſome of them humourous; but their chief excellence

letters and verſes to her publiſhed, and pamphlets made of her ſayings and jokes *; and to crown all, after being the mother of ſeveral ante-nuptial children, ſhe obtained the title and rank of a ducheſs by marriage. There is ſcarcely, if at all, to be found in hiſtory an example, where a private ſubject, undiſtinguiſhed either by birth or fortune, had it in his power to feaſt his reſentment ſo richly at the expence of his ſovereign. But this was not all. He went on in the ſame humour, and caſt a ſecond part in the like-faſhioned mold; which being excluded from the ſtage by the Lord Chamberlain, he was encouraged to print it with the title of Polly, by ſubſcription, and this too, conſidering the powers employed againſt it, was incredibly large †. Neither yet did it end here.

* Swift's Intelligencer, No. iii.

† It was ſaid, that he got more this way, than he could have done by a bare theatrical repreſentation. Cibber the father, in his Apology, p. 144.

cellence is in their propriety, and that beautiful ſimplicity which characteriſes moſt of them ||.

The

here. The Duke and Ducheſs of Queensbury took part in reſenting the indignity put upon him by this laſt act of power, reſigned their reſpective places at court, took our author into their houſe and family, and treated him with all the endearing kindneſs of an intimate and much beloved friend.

|| La Fontaine was at the ſame time the celebrated fabuliſt in France. His fables have vaſt merit, and his are tales humourous, but indelicate. His humour was exceedingly averſe to confinement, or reſtraint of any kind, yet to oblige his parents he ſuffered himſelf to be married; and, though the moſt unfeeling and inſenſible of mortals, was yet ſo far captivated by the wit and beauty of his wife, that he never performed any conſiderable work without conſulting her.

The generous and witty Madame de la Sabliere furniſhed him with an apartment and all neceſſaries in her houſe; who, one day having turned away

all

The ſame may be ſaid of Philips's paſtorals, which in fact are beneath criticiſm.

We

all her ſervants in a pet, declared that ſhe had kept but three animals in her houſe, which were her dog, her cat, and La Fontaine. In this ſituation he continued twenty years, during which time he became perfectly acquainted with all the wits of his time, with Moliere, Racine, Boileau, Chapelle, &c.

The delights of Paris, and the converſation of theſe gentlemen, did not hinder him from paying Mrs. la Fontaine a viſit every September; but that theſe viſits might turn to ſome account, he never failed to ſell a houſe or piece of land, ſo that, what with his wife's œconomy and his own, a handſome family eſtate was well nigh conſumed. His Pariſian friends urged him frequently to go and live with Mrs. la Fontaine, ſaying, that it was a ſhame to ſeparate himſelf from a woman of her merit and accompliſhments; and accordingly he ſet out with a purpoſe of reconciling himſelf to her

We have lately had ſome eſſays in this ſpecies of poetry, publiſhed under the title

her, and arriving at the town, enquired at his houſe for her. The ſervant not knowing him, ſaid, ſhe was gone to church: upon which he immediately returned to Paris, and when his friends enquired about his reconciliation, anſwered, that "he had been to ſee his wife, but was told that ſhe was at church."

In the year 1692 he was ſeized with a dangerous illneſs: and when the prieſt came to talk to him about religion, concerning which he had lived in an extreme careleſſneſs, though he had never been either an infidel, or a libertine, Fontaine told him, that "he had lately beſtowed ſome hours in reading the New Teſtament, which he thought a very good book."

Fontaine's life had as little affectation in it as his writings: he was all nature, without a grain of art. He had a ſon, it ſeems, whom, after keeping a ſhort time at home, he recommended to the patronage of the preſident Harlay. Fontaine being

title of *Oriental Eclogues*, that have very great merit. The language is neither deſ-

one day at a houſe, where his ſon was come, did not know him again; but obſerved to the company, that he thought him a boy of parts and ſpirit. He was told, that this promiſing youth was no other than his own ſon; he anſwered very unconcernedly, "Ha! truly I am glad on't." This apathy, which ſo many philoſophers have vainly affected, was perfectly natural to Fontaine: it went thro' every part of his behaviour, and ſeemed to render him inſenſible to every thing without. As he had a wonderful facility in compoſing, ſo he had no particular apartment for that purpoſe, but fell to work, whenever the humour came upon him. One morning, Madame Bouillon going to Verſailles, ſpied him in deep thought under a tree; and, when ſhe returned in the evening, there was Fontaine in the ſame place and attitude, tho' the day had been cold, and much rain fallen.

It has been obſerved, that the fineſt writers have uſually been but indifferent companions. This

was

deſpicably plain, nor too elegant for paſtorals. And ſeveral of the eclogues con-

was Fontaine's caſe: for having once been invited to dine at the houſe of a perſon of diſtinction, for the more elegant entertainment of the gueſts, though he eat very heartily, yet not a word could be got from him, and when, riſing ſoon after from the table, on pretence of going to the academy, he was told he would be too ſoon, "Oh then, ſaid he, I'll take the longeſt way."

Racine once carried Fontaine to the Tenebræ, which is a ſervice in the church of Rome, in repreſentation of our Saviour's glory in the garden; and perceiving it too long for him put a Bible into his hands. Fontaine, happening to open it at the prayer of the Jews in Barùch, read it over and over with ſuch admiration, that he could not forbear whiſpering to Racine, "This Baruch is a fine writer; do you know any thing of him?" and for ſome days after, if he chanced to meet with any perſon of letters, when the uſual compliments were over, his queſtion was, "Have you ever read

contain ſome very beautiful deſcriptive lines. How expreſſive is the following account of a ſultry deſart?

In

Baruch? There's a firſt rate genius:" and this ſo loud, that every body might hear him.

Being one day with Boileau, Racine, and other men of note, among whom were eccleſiaſtics, St. Auſtin was talked of for a long time, and with the higheſt commendations. Fontaine liſtened with his natural air, and at laſt, after a profound ſilence, aſked one of the eccleſiaſtics with the moſt unaffected ſerioufneſs, "Whether he thought St. Auſtin [illegible] more wit than Rabelais?" The doctor, eying him from head to foot, anſwered only by obſerving, that "he had put on one of his ſtockings the wrong ſide outward;" which happened to be the caſe.

The nurſe, who attended Fontaine in his illneſs, obſerving the fervor of the prieſt in his exhortations, ſaid to him, "Ah, good Sir, don't diſturb him ſo; he is rather ſtupid than wicked:" and at another time, "God won't have the heart to damn him." Theſe, and many other ſtories, are

told

In ſilent horror o'er the boundleſs waſte,
The driver Haſſan with his camels paſt:
One cruſe of water on his back he bore,
And his light ſcrip contain'd a ſcanty ſtore;
A fan of painted feathers in his hand,
To guard his ſhaded face from ſcorching ſand.
The ſultry ſun had gain'd the middle ſky,
And not a tree, and not an herd was nigh;
The beaſts, with pain, their duſky way purſue,
Shrill roar'd the winds, and dreary was the view.
With deſp'rate ſorrow wild, th' affrighted man
Thrice ſigh'd, thrice ſtrook his breaſt; and thus began:
"Sad was the hour, and luckleſs was the day,
"When firſt for Schiraz walls I bent my way *."

told of Fontaine, which either are, or, as we ſuppoſe, might have been true. One thing, however, muſt be mentioned to his honour: it is, that his widow being moleſted about the payment of ſome public money, the intendant gave orders, that no tax or impoſt ſhould be levied upon his family; nor has this diſtinguiſhing favour ever been revoked by any ſucceeding intendants.

* Oriental Eclogues, p. 7.

This is a very expreſſive and well-wrought deſcription. The poetry in the following lines is worthy of Pope himſelf.

Here, where no ſprings in murmurs break away,
Or moſs-grown fountains mitigate the day,
In vain ye hope the green delights to know,
Which plains more bleſt, or verdant vales beſtow:
Here rocks alone, and taſteleſs ſands are found,
And faint and ſickly winds for ever howl around †.

The verſification in theſe lines is extremely harmonious, and the expreſſion rich and happy. Theſe eclogues are much ſuperior in merit to thoſe of Gay, Philips, or any others of thoſe abſurd writers of paſtorals, who imagine that a laboured ruſticity forms their peculiar

† Oriental Eclogues, p. 8.

beauties.

beauties. One more paſſage I muſt quote—the peculiar excellence of it will excuſe the quotation.

At that dead hour the ſilent aſp ſhall creep,
If ought of reſt I find upon my ſleep;
Or ſome ſwoln ſerpent twiſt his ſcales around,
And wake to anguiſh with a burning wound.
Thrice happy they, the wiſe contented poor,
From luſt of wealth, and dread of death ſecure!
They tempt no deſarts, and no griefs they find;
Peace rules the day, where reaſon rules the mind *.

This elegant author charms us with his expreſſive beauty. His language is every where pure and maſculine; his verſification generally muſical; and his deſcriptions wrought with a maſterly hand.

* Oriental Eclogues, p. 10.

SECT. II.

Of SATIRE.

THAT the proper ſubjects for ſatirical writings are the follies and foibles of human nature, is agreed by all critics; but ill-nature has too often obliged its votaries to break through this neceſſary rule. 'Tis remarkable to obſerve, how little ill-nature Horace or Juvenal have admitted into their ſatires. The genteel raillery of the former, was always directed againſt the follies and abſurdities of the age. And Juvenal laſhed the vices of his times with all the keenneſs of ſatire; but neither of them ever deſcended to private attacks. The writings of theſe celebrated authors are well known; and perhaps we ſhall find the

the moderns equal to them in this ſpecies of compoſition.

That Homer was the firſt ſatiriſt cannot be aſſerted; but he is the firſt poet of whom any ſatirical ſtrokes are handed down to us. I ſhould never heſitate to rank him among the firſt of ſatiriſts, if it was only on account of that admirable character of Therſites.

Therſites only clamour'd in the throng,
Loquacious, loud, and turbulent of tongue:
Aw'd by no ſhame, by no reſpect controul'd,
In ſcandal buſy, in reproaches bold:
With witty malice ſtudious to defame;
Scorn all his joy, and laughter all his aim.
But chief he gloried with licentious ſtyle,
To laſh the great, and monarchs to revile.
His figure ſuch as might his ſoul proclaim,
One eye was blinking, and one leg was lame;
His mountain ſhoulders half his breaſt o'erſpread,
Thin hairs beſtrew'd his long miſ-ſhapen head.

Spleen

Spleen to mankind, his envious heart poſſeſt,
And much he hated all, but moſt the beſt.
Ulyſſes or Achilles ſtill his theme;
But royal ſcandal his delight ſupreme.
Long had he liv'd the ſcorn of ev'ry Greek,
Vext when he ſpoke, yet ſtill they heard him ſpeak.

Cervantes, ſecretary to the Duke of Alva, in his romance of Don Quixote, has far excelled any thing of the kind left us by the ancients; nor have latter ages produced a ſatire that can be compared to it. The nobility of Spain, in his time, were intoxicated with the idea of knight-errantry. Cervantes attacked this public folly, and laſhed it with the moſt inimitable ſpirit of humour and ridicule *. The conſequences of this ſa-

* This admirable author has diſcovered the moſt penetrating underſtanding and knowledge of mankind. His characters are as uncommon as they are natural.

tire

tire were as ſurpriſing as they were ſwift; the taſte of the whole kingdom was reformed immediately, and the abſurdity of their former notions was conſidered in its true light. No modern ſatire was ever ſo generally read as this of Cervantes. It has been tranſlated into all the languages of Europe; and every polite nation admires the fine ſtrokes it contains, as much as the Spaniards themſelves. Quevedo might well declare his intention of burning all his own books, when he read Don Quixote ‖.

‖ But there is one impropriety, which I wonder the critics never obſerved, in a book wherein propriety is in general ſo exactly obſerved. Cervantes has painted Sancho a dull illiterate clown; but when he fixes him in his government, he is there no longer the Sancho that had attended Don Quixote, but a governor whoſe ſhrewdneſs and underſtanding far exceeds any thing that could have been expected from him.

Rabe-

Rabelais poſſeſſed as much wit almoſt as any man that ever exiſted. The ſtrokes of humour that he has introduced into his celebrated romance are numerous, and peculiarly marked; the ſatire is keen, and the whole work bears many ſigns of a fertile imagination. This author would have been in higher eſteem, had he not wrote in too licentious a ſtrain.

Boileau's ſatires and his Lutrin, diſcover throughout an infinite deal of poignant ſatire, happily tempered with great politeneſs and delicacy of wit. This elegant writer had remarkable ſucceſs, when he followed the bent of his genius, and applied himſelf to ſatirical compoſitions. Yet he has ſometimes offended againſt the juſt rules of ſatire, by making mankind in general, inſtead of the vicious

vicious part, the ſubject of his ridicule. "Monſieur Boileau," ſays Mr. Addiſon, "has in his laſt ſatire endeavoured to expoſe the female ſex in general, without doing juſtice to the valuable part of it. Such levelling ſatires are of no uſe to the world, and for this reaſon I have often wondered how Monſ. Boileau, who was a man of exquiſite judgment, and a lover of virtue, could think human nature a proper ſubject for ſatire in another of his celebrated pieces, which is called, *The ſatire upon man.* What vice or frailty can a diſcourſe correct, which cenſures the whole ſpecies alike, and endeavours to ſhow by ſome ſuperficial ſtrokes of wit, that brutes are the moſt excellent creatures of the two? A ſatire ſhould expoſe nothing but what is corrigible, and make a due diſcrimination

nation between thoſe who are, and thoſe who are not the proper objects of it *."

But the Lutrin of this agreeable author is free from thoſe faults that Mr. Addiſon ſo juſtly corrects in the above paſſage. It is, although inferior to Pope's Rape of the Lock, certainly a very beautiful poem; full of ſtriking and lively imagery, and abounds with many exquiſite deſcriptions.

Among the writers of our own nation have appeared ſome geniuſes particularly formed for ſatire. The Hudibras of Butler is univerſally known, and, among thoſe who take the pains to inform themſelves of the many perſons and circumſtances alluded to, as univerſally admired. His poem certainly contains many

* Spectator, Vol. iii. Numb. 209.

beautiful

beautiful paſſages, that are compoſed with infinite wit*. 'Tis well known what great advantage the royal cauſe received from this ingenious ſatire; nevertheleſs ſo unmindful was Charles the Second to reward merit, that he ſuffered Butler to remain in obſcurity and want, without ever having the generoſity to aſſiſt him. At preſent Hudibras is but ſeldom read †.

Dryden

* No author ever excelled Butler in the art of introducing abundance of erudition into ſo comic a poem. Few pieces ever compoſed contain more learning than Hudibras.

† Voltaire, ſpeaking of Hudibras, ſays, " Il y a ſur tout un poeme Anglois que je déſeſpererois de vous faire connoître, il s'appelle Hudibraſs. Le ſujet eſt la guerre civile, & la ſecte des puritains tournée en ridicule. C'eſt Don Quichotte, c'eſt notre ſatire Menippée fondus enſemble. C'eſt de tous les livres que j'ai jamais lu, celui où j'ai trouvé le plus d'eſprit, mais c'eſt auſſi le plus intraduiſible.

Dryden had great abilities for ſatire. The generality of his pieces are almoſt the refuſe of our language, but in ſome appears the richneſs of his genius, and in none more than his ſatirical compoſitions. Abſalom and Achitophel, and Mac Flecno, are maſter-pieces: in theſe poems, but particularly the former, we diſcover ſuch a pomp and harmony of numbers, ſuch a happy turn and elegance of expreſſion, and ſuch exquiſite art in pourtraying characters, that, to

traduiſible. Qui croiroit qu'un livre qui ſaiſit tous les ridicules du genre humain, & qui a plus de penſées que de mots, ne put ſouffrir la traduction? C'eſt que preſque tout y fait alluſion à des avantures particulieres. Le plus grand ridicule tombe ſur tout ſur les théologiens que peu de gens du monde entendent. Il faudroit à tout moment un commentaire, & la plaiſanterie expliquée ceſſe d'etre plaiſanterie. Tout commentateur de bons mots eſt un ſot.—Lettres ſur les Anglois, p. 196.

uſe

uſe an expreſſion of Mr. Hume's, we cannot but wonder at the great inferiority, or rather abſurdity of many of his other writings *. Poſſibly there never was

* That many of the writings of this great man are very mean, muſt be allowed, and perhaps ſome of the abuſe which was levelled at him in his lifetime might be well grounded; but not a thouſandth part of ſuch ſlanders are true. Of all others, the virulous pen of Biſhop Burnet deſerves the moſt contempt: He pours out all the malice of his ſoul in a heavy, dull, prolix ſtile.

" I have been informed from England, ſays he, that a gentleman, who is famous both for poetry and ſeveral other things, has ſpent three months tranſlating Mr. Varillas's hiſtory; but that, as ſoon as my reflections appeared, he diſcontinued his labour, finding the credit of his author was gone. Now, if he thinks it is recovered by his anſwer, he will perhaps go on with his tranſlation; and this may be, for aught I know, as good an entertainment for him, as the converſation he has ſet on foot between the hinds and panthers, and all

was a character drawn in a more masterly manner than that of Zimri. As often as

the reſt of the animals, for whom Mr. Varillas may ſerve well enough as an author: and this hiſtory and that poem are ſuch extraordinary things of their kind, that it will be but ſuitable to ſee the author of the worſt poem become likewiſe the tranſlator of the worſt hiſtory that the age has produced. If his grace and his wit improve both proportionably, we ſhall hardly find, that he has gained much by the change he has made, from having no religion to chuſe one of the worſt. It is true, he had ſomewhat to ſink from in matter of wit; but as for his morals, it is ſcarce poſſible for him to grow a worſe man than he was. He has lately wreaked his malice on me for ſpoiling his three months labour; but in it he has done me all the honour that any man can receive from him, which is to be railed at by him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wiſh a very bad wiſh for him, it ſhould be, that he would go on and finiſh his tranſlation. By that it will appear, whether the Engliſh nation, which is the moſt

as it has been quoted, its many beauties will plead for my inſerting it here. In

moſt competent judge in this matter, has, upon the ſeeing our debate, pronounced in Mr. Varillas's favour or mine. It is true, Mr. Dryden will ſuffer a little by it; but at leaſt it will ſerve to keep him in from other extravagancies; and, if he gains little honour by this work, yet he cannot loſe ſo much by it, as he has done by his laſt employment." This paſſage, beſides the fact it lets us into, ſhews how ill an opinion Dr. Burnet had entertained of Mr. Dryden and his morals. Dr. Burnet ſpeaks of him alſo in another place, in terms of equal diſhonour: "The ſtage, ſays he, was defiled beyond all example; Dryden, the great maſter of dramatic poeſy, being a monſter of immodeſty and impurities of all ſorts." But here the poet found an advocate in the Lord Lanſdown, who has flatly oppoſed the biſhop's aſſertion: "Why, ſays his lordſhip, is Mr. Dryden ſtigmatized as a monſter of immodeſty and impurities of all ſorts? He was ſo much a ſtranger to immodeſty, that modeſty in too great a degree was his failing. A monſter of impurities of all ſorts? Good God! what an idea muſt that give?

In the firſt rank of theſe did Zimri ſtand.
A man ſo various that he ſeemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was every thing by ſtarts, and nothing long;
But in the courſe of one revolving moon,
Was chymiſt, fidler, ſtateſman, and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Beſides ten thouſand freaks that dy'd in thinking.
Bleſt madman, who cou'd every hour employ,
With ſomething new to wiſh or to enjoy!
Railing and praiſing were his uſual themes;
And both (to ſhow his judgment) in extremes;
So over violent or over civil,
That every man with him was god or devil.
In ſquandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but deſert:
Beggar'd by fools, whom ſtill he found too late,
He had his jeſt, and they had his eſtate.

He

Is there any wickedneſs under the ſun, but what is compriſed in thoſe few words? But, as it happens, he was the reverſe of all this: a man of regular life and converſation, as all his acquaintance can vouch. And I cannot but grieve, that ſuch expreſſions ſhould eſcape from a biſhop's pen."

He laugh'd himſelf from court; then ſought relief,
In forming parties, but cou'd ne'er be chief.

The ſatire in this portrait is keen to the laſt degree; and the poetry nervous and elegant. The peculiar marks of the Duke of Buckingham's character are here expoſed with the fineſt ſpirit of ridicule. But this nobleman had his revenge. The character of Achitophel is alſo drawn with great art and power of poetry; how ſevere are theſe lines?

And all to leave, what with his toil he won,
To that unfeather'd two legg'd thing, a ſon:
Got, while his ſoul did huddled notions try;
And born a ſhapeleſs lump like anarchy.
In friendſhip falſe, implacable in hate;
Reſolv'd to ruin, or to rule the ſtate.

And how beautiful is the thought, in the paſſage where he celebrates the ſofter virtues of Abſalom? He ſays,

In peace, the thoughts of war he could remove,
And ſeem'd as he were only born for love.
Whate'er he did, was done with ſo much eaſe,
In him alone 'twas natural to pleaſe.

I could produce many more ſpecimens out of this beautiful poem to ſtrengthen my aſſertions; but as the nature of this work lays me under a neceſſity of quoting many paſſages, I ſhall be as ſparing of thoſe that are not remarkable as I can conſiſtently with my plan.

Swift poſſeſſed a genius naturally turned for ſatire, and had he cultivated it with that care and decency which true ſatire requires, he might poſſibly have proved the greateſt maſter in that ſpecies of writing that ever appeared in the world. No mortal had ever more wit; but that wit was not employed in the cauſe of virtue; his poignant ſatire was levelled

levelled against human nature in general; and tho' the vivacity of Swift's wit can never fail to entertain the imagination; yet every reader, whoſe breaſt is warmed with more exalted notions of the dignity of human nature, muſt deteſt his principles. Gulliver's travels, that celebrated production of a fine irregular genius, is certainly in point of wit and ſatire one of the moſt exquiſite works of imagination that ever was compoſed; and had Swift wrote it only to ſatirize the vices and follies of human nature, he would have bore away the palm from every other ſatiriſt, in antient or modern times: ſome parts of theſe travels are not exceptionable, and deſerve the greateſt praiſe, when the wit is properly directed; but the voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms, is ſuch a laboured argument, to perſuade

us that mankind are no better than brutes, that every honeſt mind muſt abominate ſo vile an attempt. In this part Swift's wit appears to the greateſt diſadvantage; it ſeems to deſert the ſubject, and no where ſo evidently flaggs. Indelicacy is another great ſtain in the pages of this admired author's writings. In the journey to the flying iſland, are ſeveral unpardonable ſtrokes, and ſome in the voyage to Brobdingnag. As to the peculiar beauties of this celebrated romance, the lively flaſhes of wit, the keenneſs of ſatire, the penetrating touches of the human heart, together with the more exterior beauties of compoſition, every one muſt allow it a moſt exquiſite performance. Many of Swift's poems are wrote with that ſharp ſatire and vivacity of wit, which diſtinguiſhes

all

all his writings, but ſome of them are greatly wanting in point of delicacy *.

Garth

* This writer, ſays Dr. Young, has ſo ſatirized human nature, as to give a demonſtration in himſelf, that it deſerves to be ſatirized. But, ſay his wholeſale admirers, few could *ſo* have written; true, and fewer *would*. If it required great abilities to commit the fault, greater ſtill would have ſaved him from it. But whence ariſe ſuch warm advocates for ſuch a performance? From hence, *viz.* before a character is eſtabliſhed, merit makes fame; afterwards fame makes merit. *Swift* is not commended for this piece, but this piece for *Swift*. He has given us ſome beauties which deſerve all our praiſe; and our comfort is, that his faults will not become common; for none can be guilty of them, but who have wit as well as reputation to ſpare. His wit had been leſs wild, if his temper had not joſtled his judgment. If his favourite *Houyhnhnms* could write, and *Swift* had been one of them, every horſe with him would have been an aſs, and he would have written a panegyric on mankind, ſaddling with much reproach

Garth, in his Diſpenſary, has employed a great deal of wit to ridicule the phyſicians.

proach the preſent heroes of his pen: on the contrary, being born amongſt men, and, of conſequence, piqued by many, and peeviſh at more, he has blaſphemed a nature little lower than that of angels, and aſſumed by far higher than they; but ſurely the contempt of the world is not a greater virtue, than the contempt of mankind is a vice. Therefore I wonder that, though foreborn by others, the laughter-loving *Swift* was not reproved by the venerable Dean, who could ſometimes be very grave.

For I remember, as I and others were taking with him an evening's walk, about a mile out of *Dublin*, he ſtopt ſhort; we paſſed on; but perceiving he did not follow us, I went back; and found him fixed as a ſtatue, and earneſtly gazing upwards at a noble elm, which in its uppermoſt branches was much withered and decayed: pointing at it, he ſaid, "I ſhall be like that tree, I ſhall die at top." As in this he ſeemed to propheſy like the Sybils; if, like one of them, he had burnt

ficians. 'Tis a well wrote poem, although little more than an imitation of Boileau's Lutrin, but greatly inferior. There are some faults in it, which must disgust a reader of discernment. The following lines contain a great deal of just criticism:

The

But in your lines let energy be found,
And learn to rise in sense and sink in sound.
Harsh words, tho' pertinent, uncouth appear,
None please the fancy who offend the ear.
In sense and numbers if you would excel,
Read Wycherley, consider Dryden well.
In one what vigorous turns of fancy shine,
In th' other, Syrens warble in each line.
If Dorset's sprightly muse but touch the lyre,
The smiles and graces melt in soft desire,
And little loves confess their am'rous fire ‡.

burnt part of his works, especially *this* blasted branch of a noble genius, like her too he might have risen in his demand for the rest *.

* Conjectures on Original Composition, p. 65.

‡ Dispensary, canto iv.

The verification is musical, and the whole passage truly poetic; but who in the name of wonder would imagine Garth could have offended against the plainest rules of propriety, so much as to put the above passage into the mouth of the fury Disease. In his sight of the physicians, he consulted propriety with great nicety, when he armed them so much in character. But the poem in general abounds with a great deal of wit, and some manly and keen satire. I must agree in opinion with the ingenious author of the *Essay on the writings and genius of Pope*, that the Dispensary is not so good a satire as the Sangrado of Le Sage. The latter contains infinitely more wit, and is worked up to a fine pitch of satire, by a great number of little strokes of humour. Le Sage was an excellent satirist.

Pope

Pope deſerves to be conſidered more particularly. His ſatires are the moſt excellent that ever appeared in the Engliſh language, and ſome of them the beſt pieces that Pope wrote. The genius of this celebrated writer nearly reſembled that of *Horace* and Boileau, the former of whom he made his pattern in poetry, all famous for their abilities in ſatire. A learned gentleman that has lately examined ſome of Pope's works, and amongſt others the *Rape of the Lock*, makes no ſcruple to aſſert, that that piece is the beſt ſatire extant *. And when we conſider

* Upon the whole, I hope it will not be thought an exaggerated panegyric to ſay, that the *Rape of the Lock* is the beſt ſatire extant; that it contains the trueſt and livelieſt picture of modern life; and that the ſubject is of a more elegant nature, as well as more artfully conducted, than that of any other heroi-comic poem. Pope here

ſider the invention that poem diſplays, the correctneſs of the verſification, the exquiſite judgment of the author in introducing the machinery of the Sylphs in their proper places (for at firſt it was publiſhed without them) and the elegant raillery with which it abounds, we have great reaſon to acquieſce in his opinion.

Pope's

here appears in the light of a man of gallantry, and of a thorough knowledge of the world; and indeed he had nothing in his carriage or deportment of that affected ſingularity, which has induced ſome men of genius to deſpiſe, and depart from, the eſtabliſhed rules of politeneſs and civil life; for all poets have not practiſed the ſober and rational advice of Boileau,

Que les vers ne ſoient pas votre eternel emploi :
Cultivez vos amis, ſoyez homme de foi.
C'eſt peu d'etre agréable & charmant dans un livre;
Il fait ſavoir encore, & converſer, & vivre.

L'Art Poetique, Chant 4.

If

Pope's imitations of Horace, with the prologue and epilogue to his ſatires, are without diſpute ſome of the beſt of his works; but very few, if any of his pieces, excel them. No author ever imitated

If ſome of the moſt candid among the French critics begin to acknowledge, that they have produced nothing in point of ſublimity and majeſty equal to the Paradiſe Loſt, we may alſo venture to affirm that in point of delicacy, elegance, and fine turned raillery, on which they have ſo much valued themſelves, they have produced nothing equal to the *Rape of the Lock*. It is in this compoſition, Pope principally appears a poet; in which he has diſplayed more imagination than all his other works taken together. It ſhould however be remembered, that he was not the firſt former and creator of thoſe beautiful machines the Sylphs, on which his claim to imagination is chiefly founded. He found them exiſting ready to his hand; but has indeed employed them with ſingular judgment and artifice.

Eſſay on Pope, p. 246.

the

the manner of Horace ſo happily; and as Pope's genius was naturally inclined to ſatire, he has filled theſe imitations with a thouſand bright ſallies of wit, and keen ſtrokes of ridicule, in many places much more delicate and ſuperior to thoſe of his original. Pope's are generally ſuch cloſe imitations that they cannot in their nature diſplay that great principle of original poetry, *invention:* But for many of thoſe fine ſtrokes of ſevere, but genteel ſatire, in the prologue and epilogue, he was indebted to nothing but his own imagination; and it will not be a difficult taſk to prove that they abound with ſome beautiful paſſages, ſuperior to any thing of the kind our language has produced. The ſatire on bad authors is every where remarkably animated. The following paſſage on the *cacoëthes ſcribendi* is extremely ſevere.

"3. Is there a parſon much be-mus'd in beer?
A maudlin poeteſs, a rhyming peer,
A clerk, foredoom'd his father's ſoul to croſs,
Who pens a ſtanza, when he ſhould engroſs?
Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, ſcrawls
With deſp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?" *

Pope, in all his ſatyrical writings, is very happy in his epithets; a parſon *much be-mus'd in beer*, maudlin poeteſs, &c. throw a great pleaſantry over the whole paſſage, and heightens the ridicule extremely: the circumſtance of the clerk is alſo finely introduced †.

The

* Pope's works, vol. iv. p. 4. ſmall edit.

† The thoughts of men, ſays Voltaire, are become an important object in commerce: the bookſellers in Holland gain a million yearly, becauſe Frenchmen formerly had wit. A middling romance is, as I am perfectly well aſſured, among books, what a fool, that would be thought a man of imagination, is in the world: people laugh at him,

The whole paſſage in the beginning of the prologue, in which he ſuppoſes his intereſt and advice deſired by a parcel of hungry ſcribblers, is worked up with an infinite deal of wit. Sure never author ridiculed theſe ſcribblers with ſuch ſeverity of ſatire.

2. And drop at laſt, but in unwilling ears,
This ſaving counſel, "Keep your piece nine years."
Nine

but yet they put up with him. This romance gives bread to the author who has compoſed it, to the bookſeller who vends it, together with the type-founder, printer, bookbinder, hawker, and, laſtly, the retailer of execrable wine, with whom all thoſe gentlemen lay out their money: this work will moreover ſerve for two or three hours amuſement to a few women, with whom novelty is the moſt eſſential quality in books, as it is in every thing elſe. Thus contemptible as it is, it has produced two things of vaſt importance, profit and pleaſure.

Voltaire's Works, vol. xvii. p. 36.

Nine years! cries he, who high in Drury-lane
Lull'd by ſoft Zephyrs thro' the broken pane,
Rhymes e'er he wakes, and prints before term ends,
Oblig'd by hunger, and requeſt of friends. *

What can be more keen than the ſatire in theſe lines? With what art the poet has introduced the circumſtance of the garret with broken windows; and has coupled the real and pretended motive for publiſhing together, with vaſt wit?

3. Who ſhames a ſcribbler? break one cobweb thro',
He ſpins the ſlight ſelf-pleaſing thread anew:
Deſtroy his fib or ſophiſtry, in vain,
The creature's at his dirty work again;
Thron'd on the center of his thin deſigns,
Proud of a vaſt extent of flimſy lines! †

The metaphorical alluſion of a ſcribbler to a ſpider in this paſſage is poetical-

* Verſe 39. † Verſe 90.

ly beautiful; and much more expreſſive than a compariſon would have been. The likeneſs is very ſtriking, and the circumſtances naturally riſe out of one another,

4. From ſlaſhing Bentley down to pidling Tibald*:

"This great man, ſays Dr. Warburton, with all his faults, deſerved to be put into better company." Pope ſpeaks of him as a man of ſuperior abilities to Theobald. That he had very great learning was never diſputed, but the epithet *ſlaſhing* characteriſed his critical abilities extremely well. No one could better explain a corrupted paſſage in a claſſic writer; but his fault was his attacking the ſound places, and when once he had pitched on a line to be altered, he

* Verſe 164.

was

was moſt unmerciful on his author, to make way for his own emendations *.

Theobald, the ſecond of theſe worthies, was ſo unfortunate as to offend Pope by publiſhing an edition of Shakeſpear againſt him, for which he was put into the Dunciad.

* Bentley ſhowed the way to critics to correct paſſages merely for the ſake of conſonance of metaphor, and gave a ſpecimen in his notes on Callimachus of his emendations of Horace, by correcting the following verſe,

Et male tornatos *incudi reddere verſus.*

Hor. art. poet. 441.

where he reads *ter natos*, for conſonance of metaphor. But pray take notice *ter natos* is a metaphorical expreſſion; for *naſcor*, *natus*, ſignifies to be born; and are things *born* brought to the anvil? Is not here diſſonance of metaphor with a witneſs? For an examination of ſome of the Doctor's corrections, vide Upton's Critical Obſervations on Shakeſpear, ſect. 1. and p. 99, 119, 137, 176.

There hapleſs Shakeſpear, yet of Tibbald ſore,
Wiſh'd he had blotted for himſelf before.

But his edition is preferable to Mr. Pope's; and indeed is his only labour that has eſcaped oblivion. The publick at this time waits with impatience for the edition of Shakeſpear which the celebrated Mr. Johnſon is preparing. We have great reaſon to believe that ſo learned and ingenious a gentleman will do as much juſtice to the merits of that immortal man, as the unhappy ſtate of his works will admit.

5. Ev'n ſuch ſmall critics ſome regard may claim,
Preſerv'd in Milton's or in Shakeſpear's name.
Pretty in amber to obſerve the forms
Of hairs, or ſtraws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there *.

* Verſe 167.

The

The imagery in these lines is excessively beautiful, the satire poignant to the last degree, and the thought expressed with great propriety. Nothing so detestable, but its representation in amber, or in works of art, gives great pleasure. Dr. Warburton justly observes on this passage, that the thought is extremely beautiful.

6. How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!
And swear, not Addison himself was safe.
Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires,
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;

Willing to wound, and yet afraid to ſtrike,
Juſt hint a fault, and hesitate diſlike;
Alike reſerv'd to blame or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a ſuſpicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers beſieg'd,
And ſo obliging that he ne'er oblig'd;
Like Cato give his little ſenate laws,
And ſit attentive to his own applauſe;
While wits and templars ev'ry ſentence raiſe,
And wonder with a fooliſh face of praiſe——
Who but muſt laugh, if ſuch a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

This celebrated ſatire on Addiſon is drawn in ſo maſterly a manner, and contains ſo many beautiful ſtrokes, that I could not forbear quoting it at length. That line, *not Addiſon himſelf was ſafe*, is a very artful preparative for the following character, which is certainly one of the fineſt pieces of ſatire extant.

Addiſon was envious of Pope's reputation as a poet, and endeavoured to ſuppreſs

preſs his riſing merit. "It is certain," ſays the author of the eſſay on Pope, "that Addiſon diſcouraged Pope from inſerting the machinery in the Rape of the Lock: that he privately inſinuated that Pope was a tory and a jacobite, and had a hand in writing the Examiners: that Addiſon himſelf tranſlated the firſt book of Homer, publiſhed under Tickel's name ‡: and that he ſecretly

‡ Concerning this accuſation, there are ſome circumſtances in Pope's letters, that ſerve to prove it very clearly. Dr. Parnell writes to him, "I have ſeen the firſt book of Homer, which came out at a time when it could not but appear as a kind of ſetting up againſt you. My opinion is, that you may, if you pleaſe, give them thanks who writ it. Neither the numbers nor the ſpirit have an equal maſtery with your's; but what ſurprizes me more is, that a ſcholar being concerned, there ſhould happen to be ſome miſtakes in the author's ſenſe;

cretly encouraged Gildon to abuſe Pope in a virulent pamphlet, for which Addiſon

ſenſe; ſuch as putting the light of Pallas's eyes into the eyes of Achilles, making the taunt of Achilles to Agamemnon (that he ſhould have ſpoils when Troy ſhould be taken) to be a cool and ſerious propoſal."—Pope's Works, vol. viii. p. 264.

And Dr. Berkley as follows, "Some days ago three or four gentlemen and myſelf, exerting that right which all readers pretend to over authors, ſat in judgment upon the two new tranſlations of the firſt Iliad. Without any partiality to my countrymen, I aſſure you, they all gave the preference where it was due; being unanimouſly of opinion that your's was equally juſt to your ſenſe with Mr. ———'s, and without compariſon more eaſy, more poetical, and more ſublime."

And Mr. Gay. "I have juſt ſet down Sir Samuel Garth at the opera. He bid me tell you, that every body is pleaſed with your tranſlation, but a few at Button's; and that Sir Richard Steel told him, that Mr. Addiſon ſaid the other tranſlation

was

diſon paid Gildon ten guineas *." The letters which had paſſed between theſe two poets, that are publiſhed in Mr. Pope's works, contain many compliments from Addiſon to Pope on his tranſlation of Homer. But what the latter's opinion was of his ſincerity, may

was the beſt that ever was in any language.— I am informed that at Button's your character is made very free with as to morals, &c. and Mr. Addiſon ſays, that your tranſlation and Tickell's are both very well done, but that the latter has more of Homer." Dr. Arbuthnot writes to him, " I congratulate you upon T * 's firſt book. It does not indeed want its merit; but I was ſtrangely diſappointed in my expectation of a tranſlation nicely true to the original; whereas in thoſe parts where the greateſt exactneſs ſeems to be demanded, he has been the leaſt careful, I mean the hiſtory of antient ceremonies and rites, &c. in which you have with great judgment been exact." Ib. p. 265, 266.

* Page 159.

be

be gathered from one of his letters to Jarvis; who, it ſeems, wrote to him concerning a propoſal to ſtrengthen the pretended friendſhip between them; and in anſwer to it, among other things, Mr. Pope ſays, "what you mention of the friendly office you endeavoured to do between Mr. Addiſon and me, deſerves acknowledgments on my part. You thoroughly know my regard to his character, and my propenſity to teſtify it by all ways in my power. You as thoroughly know the ſcandalous meanneſs of that proceeding which was uſed by Philips, to make a man I ſo highly value ſuſpect my diſpoſitions towards him. But as, after all, Mr. Addiſon muſt be the judge in what regards himſelf, and has ſeemed to be no very juſt one to me; ſo I muſt own to you, I expect nothing but civility from him, how much

much ſoever I wiſh for his friendſhip. As for any offices of real kindneſs or ſervice, which it is in his power to do me, I ſhould be aſhamed to receive them from any man who had no better opinion of my morals, than to think me a party-man; nor of my temper, than to believe me capable of maligning, or envying another's reputation as a poet. So I believe it time to convince him as to both, to ſhow him the ſhallow depths of theſe half-witted creatures who miſinformed him, and to prove that I am incapable of endeavouring to leſſen a perſon whom I ſhould be proud to imitate, and therefore aſhamed to flatter. In a word, Mr. Addiſon is ſure of my reſpect at all times, and of my real friendſhip whenever he ſhall think fit *to know me for what I am.*"

Ad-

Addiſon cannot be compared as a poet to Pope, who was far his ſuperior in that capacity; but I cannot help forming a different opinion of his poetic eſſays, from what Mr. Warton entertains of them, who ſeems rather prejudiced againſt this great man's works. He ſays the firſt of his poems, addreſſed to Dryden, Sir John Somers, and King William, are languid, proſaic, and void of any poetical imagery or ſpirit: that the poem to Dryden is languid, I grant; but why he ſhould couple the other two, particularly that to King William, I cannot ſo clearly perceive; as it abounds with ſome very poetical ſtrokes, and is compoſed with ſpirit: it has on the whole too much merit to be characteriſed in ſuch contemptible terms. His account of the greateſt Engliſh poets contains ſome very beautiful lines, particularly where

where he ſpeaks of Cowley and Milton, the latter of whom is celebrated with great ſpirit. This ingenious author's opinion of the merit of the letter from Italy, I believe will not be generally adopted. To ſay that there are no poetic ſtrokes of enthuſiaſm in it, is far from being true. And let the reader himſelf judge whether the following lines contains only a *phlegmatic elegy* on Raphael, the term by which our author characteriſes them.

Fain would I Raphael's god-like art rehearſe,
And ſhow th' immortal labours in my verſe,
Where from the mingled ſtrength of ſhade and light;
A new creation riſes to my ſight;
Such heav'nly figures from his pencil flow,
So warm with life his blended colours glow.
From theme to theme with ſecret pleaſure toſt,
Amidſt the ſoft variety I'm loſt:
Here pleaſing airs my raviſh'd ſoul confound,
With circling notes and labyrinths of ſound!

Here

Here domes and temples riſe in diſtant views;
And opening palaces invite my muſe *.

The next poem of Mr. Addiſon's, which the author of the eſſay on Pope examines, is the Campaign. ‡. The only merit

* Addiſon's works, vol. i. p. 51.

‡ Mr. Budgel, in the life of the late Lord Orrery, tells us: "Soon after the battle of Blenheim, Mr. Boyle (late Lord Carleton) then chancellor of the exchequer, was entreated by the Lord Godolphin, to go to Mr. Addiſon, and deſire him to write ſomething that might tranſmit the memory of that glorious victory to poſterity. As I believe this ſtory is not commonly known, and as I think it does honour to the late Lord Halifax (whoſe memory I muſt ever love and reſpect) I ſhall lay it before my readers. Upon the arrival of the news of the victory of Blenheim, the Lord Treaſurer Godolphin, in the fulneſs of his joy, meeting with the late Lord Halifax, told him, it was pity the memory of ſuch a victory ſhould be ever forgot; he added, that he was pretty ſure his

merit he allows it, is its containing *ſome* well wrought deſcriptions and pathetic ſtrokes,

his Lordſhip, who was ſo diſtinguiſhed a patron of men of letters, muſt know ſome perſon, whoſe pen was capable of doing juſtice to the action. My Lord Halifax replied, that he did indeed know ſuch a perſon; but would not deſire him to write upon the ſubject his Lordſhip had mentioned. The Lord Treaſurer entreating to know the reaſon of ſo unkind a reſolution, Lord Halifax briſkly told him, that he had long with indignation obſerved, that while too many fools and blockheads were maintained in their pride and luxury, at the expence of the public, ſuch men as were really an honour to their country, and to the age they lived in, were ſhamefully ſuffered to languiſh in obſcurity: that, for his own part, he would never deſire any gentleman of parts and learning, to employ his time in celebrating a miniſtry, who had neither the juſtice nor generoſity to make it worth his while. The Lord Treaſurer calmly replied, that he would ſeriouſly conſider of what his Lordſhip

ſtrokes, but blames the management of the poem in general, and calls it a gazette

had ſaid, and endeavour to give no occaſion for ſuch reproaches for the future; but that, in the preſent caſe, he took it upon himſelf to promiſe, that any gentleman whom his Lordſhip ſhould name to him, as a perſon capable of celebrating the late action, ſhould find it worth his while to exert his genius upon that ſubject. The Lord Halifax, upon this encouragement, named Mr. Addiſon; but inſiſted that the Lord Treaſurer himſelf ſhould ſend to him. His Lordſhip promiſed to do ſo; and accordingly deſired Mr. Boyle to go to him. Mr. Addiſon, who was at that time indifferently lodged, was ſurprized the next morning with a viſit from the Chancellor of the Exchequer; who, after having acquainted him with his buſineſs, added, that the Lord Treaſurer, to encourage him to enter upon his ſubject, had already made him one of the commiſſioners of appeals; but entreated him to look upon that poſt only as an earneſt of ſomething more conſiderable.

In

zette in rhyme. The regular march which is obſerved from one town to another is certainly a fault; but ſurely the poem abounds in too many beauties † to

In ſhort, the Chancellor ſaid ſo many obliging things, and in ſo graceful a manner, as gave Mr. Addiſon the utmoſt ſpirit and encouragement to begin that poem, which he afterwards publiſhed, and entitled *The Campaign*. The Lord Treaſurer kept the promiſe he had made by Mr. Boyle: and Mr. Addiſon, ſoon after the publication of his poem, was preferred to a conſiderable poſt."

† To inſtance but a few lines:

Unbounded courage and compaſſion join'd,
Temp'ring each other in the victor's mind,
Alternately proclaim him good and great,
And make the hero and the man compleat.
But O, my muſe, what numbers wilt thou find
To ſing the furious troops in battle join'd!
Methinks I hear the drum's tumultuous ſound,
The victor's ſhouts and dying groans confound,
The dreadful burſt of cannon rend the ſkies,
And all the thunde r of the battle riſe.

to be characteriſed in ſuch ſlight terms. The poetic fire burns with great brightneſs in the Campaign; the language is chaſte and elegant; and it contains ſeveral paſſages extremely beautiful.

But it was in the proſe works of this great man, in which his genius ſhines with the brighteſt luſtre. His character as an author in general is not inferior to Pope; and the Spectators, and other periodical papers which he wrote, will be

'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty ſoul was prov'd,
That in the ſhock of charging hoſts unmov'd,
Amidſt confuſion, horror, and deſpair,
Examin'd all the dreadful ſcenes of war:
In peaceful thought the field of death ſurvey'd,
To fainting ſquadrons ſent the timely aid,
Inſpir'd repuls'd battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.

The famous ſimile of the Angel is known all Europe over.

read

read and admired as long as the English language exists. They were received with equal applause in almost all the countries of Europe. "The finest geniuses in England, says a French author *, have exerted in the Spectator, all the force of their reflections, all the delicacy of style, and all the fire of imagination that can be conceived. It is an admirable work; and it has preserved a great part of its original graces and beauty in the French translation. There is such a prodigious variety in it, both with regard to the style, and the subjects which it treats of, that we may justly affirm, the French nation has nothing to oppose to this work, that can be considered in all respects equal to it.

* Dissertat. sur la Poëfie Angloise, in the Journal Literaire, tome ix. p. 159, 160.

The Tatlers, Spectators and Guardians, have been tranſlated into moſt of the European languages, and given birth to ſeveral papers in imitation of them in foreign countries. The French had for ſome time their Babilliard, or Tatler, and Monſ. Baſtide at preſent writes Le Nouveau Spectateur. The Dutch have to this day their Spectator; and the Germans had for ſome years together their Guardian. This laſt paper was printed at Hamburgh, and compoſed by a ſociety of gentlemen who underſtood Engliſh; they tranſlated ſeveral of the Spectators, which had not before appeared in the German language; and this gave their Guardians ſo great a reputation, that nine or ten thouſand of them were uſually ſold.

When

When † the old Spectator was laid down by thoſe hands which at firſt compoſed it, the paper was immediately ſet on foot again by ſome of the greateſt wits in England, ſeveral of whoſe writings of different kinds had been received with the utmoſt applauſe by the public; yet even theſe gentlemen, to their great ſurprize, found the thing would not do; and had the good ſenſe not only to drop their deſign, but to conceal their names. Mr. Addiſon ſaid upon this occaſion, that he looked upon the undertaking to write Spectators, to be like the attempt of Penelope's lovers to ſhoot in the bow of Ulyſſes; who ſoon found that nobody could ſhoot ſo well in that bow, but the hand which uſed to draw it."

† See the Bee, or Univerſal Weekly Pamphlet, No. i. p. 26, 27.

Amongſt the characters in that work, that of Sir Roger de Coverly was the favourite with Mr. Addiſon; who a little before he laid down the Spectator, foreſeeing that ſome nimble gentleman would catch up his pen the moment he had quitted it, ſaid to an intimate friend, with a certain warmth in his expreſſion, which he was not often guilty of, "By G—d, I'll kill Sir Roger, that no-body elſe may murder him." Accordingly the whole Spectator, No. 517, conſiſts of nothing elſe but an account of the Knight's death, and ſome moving circumſtances which attended it. At another time Sir Richard Steele, in one of his Spectators, having a little injudiciouſly made the old Knight pick up a looſe woman in the Temple cloyſter, Mr. Addiſon was ſo heartily vexed when he read the

the paper, that he immediately called a coach, went to his friend Sir Richard, and never left him till he had made him promiſe that he would meddle no more with Sir Roger's character *.

Mr. Addiſon certainly ranks among the fineſt geniuſes this iſland ever produced. He has a more refined, decent, judicious, and extenſive genius than Pope or Swift. To diſtinguiſh this triumvirate from each other, and, like Newton, to diſcover the different colours in theſe genuine and meridian rays of literary light, Swift is a ſingular wit, Pope a correct poet, Addiſon a great author. Swift looked on wit as the *jus divinum* to dominion and ſway in the world; and conſidered as uſurpation,

* See General Dictionary, Art. Addiſon.

all

all power that was lodged in perſons of leſs ſparkling underſtandings. This inclined him to tyranny in wit; Pope was ſomewhat of his opinion, but was for ſoftening tyranny into lawful monarchy; yet were there ſome acts of ſeverity in his reign. Addiſon's crown was elective, he reigned by the public voice:

——— Volentes
Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo.
VIRG.

But as good books are the medicine of the mind, if we ſhould dethrone theſe authors, and conſider them, not in their royal, but their medicinal capacity, might it not then be ſaid, that Addiſon preſcribed a wholeſome and pleaſant regimen, which was univerſally reliſhed, and did much good? that Pope preferred a purgative of ſatire, which, tho' wholeſome,

ſome, was too painful in its operation? and that Swift inſiſted on a large doſe of ipecacuanha, which, tho' readily ſwallowed from the fame of the phyſician, yet, if the patient had any delicacy of taſte, he threw up the remedy, inſtead of the diſeaſe?

Addiſon wrote little in verſe, much in ſweet elegant Virgilian proſe; ſo let me call it, ſince Longinus calls Herodotus mere Homeric, and Thucydides is ſaid to have formed his ſtyle on Pindar. Addiſon's compoſitions are built with the fineſt materials, in the taſte of the antients, and (to ſpeak his own language) on truly claſſic ground: and tho' they are the delight of the preſent age, yet I am perſuaded they will receive more juſtice from poſterity. I never read him, but I am ſtruck with ſuch a diſheartening idea

idea of perfection, that I drop my pen. And, indeed, far ſuperior writers ſhould forget his compoſitions, if they would be greatly pleaſed with their own.

And yet (perhaps you have not obſerved it) what is the common language of the world, and even of his admirers, concerning him? They call him an elegant writer. That elegance which ſhines on the ſurface of his compoſitions, ſeems to dazzle their underſtanding, and render it a little blind to the depth of ſentiment which lies beneath. Thus (hard fate!) he loſes reputation with them, by doubling his title to it. On ſubjects the moſt intereſting, and important, no author of his age has written with greater, I had almoſt ſaid with equal weight; and they who commend him for his elegance, pay him ſuch a ſort of compliment

ment by their abſtemious praiſe, as they would pay to Lucretia, if they ſhould commend her only for her beauty †.

† Conjectures on Original Compoſition, p. 101. The ſame author gives us a curious anecdote concerning him. After a long and manly, but vain ſtruggle with his diſtemper, he diſmiſſed his phyſicians, and with them all hopes of life: But with his hopes of life he diſmiſſed not his concern for the living, but ſent for a youth nearly related, and finely accompliſhed, yet not above being the better for good impreſſions from a dying friend. He came; but life now glimmering in the ſocket, the dying friend was ſilent: After a decent, and proper pauſe, the youth ſaid, "Dear Sir! you ſent for me: I believe, and I hope, that you have ſome commands; I ſhall hold them moſt ſacred." May diſtant ages, not only hear, but feel, the reply. Forcibly graſping the youth's hand, he ſoftly ſaid, "See in what peace a Chriſtian can die." He ſpoke with difficulty, and ſoon expired. Thro' grace divine, how great is man! Thro' divine mercy, how ſtingleſs death. Who would not thus expire? Conjectures on Original Compoſition, page 104.

7. But

7. **But ſtill the great have kindneſs in reſerve,**
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to ſtarve.

Theſe lines are wrote of Dryden, whoſe funeral was remarkable. There is a very odd anecdote current concerning it.

The day after he died, Dr. Sprat, then biſhop of Rocheſter, and dean of Weſtminſter, ſent word to the Lady Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he would make a preſent of the ground, and all the other abbey fees. The Lord Halifax likewiſe ſent to the Lady Elizabeth, and to Mr. Charles Dryden her ſon, offering to defray the expence of our poet's funeral, and afterwards to beſtow 500l. on a monument in the abbey: which generous offer from both was accepted. Accordingly, on the Sunday following, the company being aſſembled, the corpſe was put into a velvet herſe,

attended

attended by eighteen mourning coaches. When they were juſt ready to move, the Lord Jefferies, ſon of the lord chancellor Jefferies, with ſome of his rakiſh companions, coming by, aſked, whoſe funeral it was? and, being told it was Mr. Dryden's, he proteſted, that he ſhould not be buried in that private manner; that he would himſelf, with the Lady Elizabeth's leave, have the honour of his interment, and would beſtow 1000l. on a monument in the abbey for him. This put a ſtop to the proceſſion; and Lord Jefferies, with ſeveral of the gentlemen who had alighted from the coaches, went up ſtairs to the Lady Elizabeth, who was ſick in bed. His Lordſhip repeated the purport of what he had ſaid below; but Lady Elizabeth abſolutely refuſing her conſent, he fell on his knees, vowing never to riſe till his requeſt was granted.

The

The lady, under a ſudden ſurprize, fainted away: and Lord Jefferies, pretending to have gained her conſent, ordered the body to be carried to *Mr.* Ruſſell, an undertaker in Cheapſide, and to be left there till further orders. In the mean time the abbey was lighted up, the ground opened, the choir attending, and the biſhop waiting ſome hours to no purpoſe for the corpſe. The next day Mr. Charles Dryden waited upon Lord Halifax and the biſhop, and endeavoured to excuſe his mother, by relating the truth; but they would not hear of any excuſe. Three days after, the undertaker, receiving no orders, waited on Lord Jefferies, who turned it off in a jeſt, pretending, that thoſe who paid any regard to a drunken frolic, deſerved no better; that he remembered nothing at all of the matter, and that they may do

what

what they pleaſed with the corpſe. Upon this the undertaker waited on the Lady Elizabeth, who deſired a day to conſider what muſt be done. Mr. Charles Dryden immediately wrote to Lord Jefferies, who returned for anſwer, that he knew nothing of the matter, and would be troubled no more about it. Mr. Dryden applied again to Lord Halifax and the biſhop of Rochefter, who abſolutely refuſed to do any thing in the affair. In this diſtreſs, Dr. Garth ſent for the corpſe to the college of phyſicians, and propoſed a funeral by ſubſcription; which ſucceeding, about three weeks after Mr. Dryden's deceaſe, Dr. Garth pronounced a Latin oration over his body, which was conveyed from the college, attended by a numerous train of coaches, to Weſtminſter abbey. After the funeral, Mr. Charles Dryden ſent

Lord Jefferies a challenge, which was not accepted; and Mr. Dryden publickly declaring he would watch every opportunity to fight him, his Lordſhip thought fit to leave the town upon it, and Mr. Dryden never could meet him after.

Gen. Dict.

8. Let Sporus tremble—A. What? that thing of ſilk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of aſs's milk?
Satire or ſenſe, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butter-fly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flag this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt that ſtinks and ſtings;
Whoſe buz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er taſtes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well bred ſpaniels civilly delight,
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal ſmiles his emptineſs betray,
As ſhallow ſtreams run dimpling all the way.

I have

I have inserted the moſt ſtriking part of this character as an inſtance of wit and poignant ſatire. It is worked up with all imaginable art; and receives an infinite deal of beauty from the epithets, with which he has painted Sporus, *thing of ſilk, mere white curd of aſs's milk, a butter-fly, a bug with gilded wings, a painted child of dirt.* And the ſimile that concludes the paſſage is exceſſively beautiful.

9. Let the two Curls of town and court, abuſe
His father, mother, body, ſoul, and muſe.

Every age and nation have their Curls. Monſ. de Voltaire ſpeaks with great humour on this ſubject. "But the moſt curious ſecret of all, ſays he, for an honeſt bookſeller, is to take care to print, at the end of the book he publiſhes, all the abuſe and ribaldry that has

been written againſt the author. Nothing is better calculated to whet the curioſity of the reader, and to quicken the ſale. I remember, among the execrable editions that have been printed in Holland of my pretended works, an artful editor of Amſterdam, who was deſirous to ſink the credit of an impreſſion printed at the Hague, thought proper to add, by way of appendix, a collection of all the ribaldry he could ſcrape together, that had been written againſt me. The firſt words of this collection called me a ſnarling cur. 'I found this book at Magdeburg, in the hands of the poſt-maſter, who never ceaſed telling me what an eloquent piece it was. Lately two worthy bookſellers of Amſterdam, after having diſfigured, as much as in them lay, the Henriade, and my other pieces, did me the honour to acquaint me by letter,

that,

that, if I perſiſted in my intention of permitting a better edition of my works to be publiſhed at Dreſden, than that which they were then engaged in, they ſhould hold themſelves bound in conſcience to publiſh againſt me a volume of the moſt atrocious calumnies, on the fineſt writing-paper, with a large margin, and the moſt beautiful letter they could procure. They have been as good as their words with me. It is pity ſuch valuable collections ſhould have been buried in oblivion. Formerly, when there were eight or nine hundred thouſand volumes fewer in Europe than at preſent, thoſe pieces of ſcandal had their effect. People read with extreme reliſh in Scaliger, that Cardinal Bellarmin was an atheiſt, the reverend father Clarius a drunkard, and that the reverend father

Clotton had ſold himſelf to the Devil. Theſe were happy days; but, alas! every thing degenerates."

Voltaire's works, vol. xiii. p. 258.

10. O friend! may each domeſtic bliſs be thine!
Be no unpleaſing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of repoſing age,
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor ſmile, and ſmooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the aſking eye,
And keep a while one parent from the ſky!
On cares like theſe if length of days attend,
May heaven to bleſs thoſe days preſerve my friend,
Preſerve him ſocial, chearful, and ſerene,
And juſt as rich as when he ſerv'd a *Queen*.
A. Whether that bleſſing be deny'd or giv'n,
Thus far was right; the reſt belongs to heav'n.

What a noble concluſion is this of the prologue to the Satires? Theſe lines are ſo exceſſively pleaſing, pathetic, and poe-

poetical, that I could not forbear inſerting the whole paſſage. Mr. Pope was remarkable for the tenderneſs of his behaviour towards his mother; many of his letters abound with peculiar inſtances of his affection for her.

Monſ. Rouſſeau has an original and admirable obſervation on filial duty.

Il y a des occaſions où un fils qui manque de reſpect à ſon frere, peut, en quelque ſorte, être excuſé: mais ſi, dans quelque occaſion que ce fût, un enfant étoit aſſez dénaturé pour en manquer à ſa mere, a celle qui l'a porté dans ſon ſein, qui l'a nourri de ſon lait, qui, durant des années, s'eſt oubliée elle-même pour ne s'occuper que de lui, on devroit ſe hâter d'étouffer ce miſérable, comme un monſtre indigne de voir le jour. Les meres, dit-on, gâtent leurs

enfans. En cela, ſans doute, elle a ſon tort; mais moins de tort que vous, peut-être, qui les dépravez. La mere veut que ſon enfant ſoit heureux, qu'il le ſoit dès à préſent. En cela elle a raiſon; quand elle ſe trompe ſur les moyens, il faut l'éclairer. L'ambition, l'avarice, la tyrannie, la fauſſe prévoyance des peres, leur négligence, leur dure inſenſibilité, ſont cent fois plus funeſtes aux enfans que l'aveugle tendreſſe de meres. Emile, Tome I. p. 4.

1. What? like Sir Richard, rumbling, rough, and fierce,
With arms, and George and Brunſwick crow'd the verſe,
Rend with tremendous ſound your ears aſunder,
With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuſs and thunder *?

* Satire i. verſe 23.

This

His ſatire on Blackmore has great humour, and is extremely juſt. Surely Mr. Locke diſcovered great want of taſte in poetry, when he declared it his opinion, that Sir Richard was as much ſuperior to all other poets, as the eagle ſoared above the wren. Dryden ſays, he "writ to the rumbling of his coach's wheels." Pope ſpeaks of him thus in the Dunciad.

But far o'er all, ſonorous Blackmore's ſtrain;
Walls, ſteeples, ſkies, bray back to him again.
In Tot'nam fields, the Brethren, with amaze,
Prick all their ears up, and forget to graze;
Long Chanc'ry-lane retentive rolls the ſound,
And courts to courts return it round and round;
Thames wafts it thence to Rufus' roaring hall,
And Hungerford re-echoes bawl for bawl.
All hail him victor in both gifts of ſong,
Who ſings ſo loudly, and who ſings ſo long ‡.

‡ Dunciad, B. ii. v. 259.

Black

Blackmore wrote no leſs than ſix epic poems, Prince Arthur, King Arthur, Eliza, Alfred, the Redeemer, and Job; beſides theſe, he compoſed the whole book of Pſalms, the Creation, Nature of Man, and many more, all void of any poetic fire, languid, proſaic, and almoſt buried in oblivion. The Creation was the beſt poem he wrote, but Addiſon has praiſed it far more than it deſerves. He ſays †, that the depths of philoſophy are there, enlivened with all the charms of poetry; but it would puzzle the moſt penetrating critic to diſcover any charms of poetry in ſo tedious a poem. Dr. Drake ſatirized him with great poignancy in the following lines:

By nature form'd, by want a pedant made,
Blackmore at firſt ſet up the whipping trade;

† Spect. No. 339.

Next

Next quack commenc'd: then fierce with pride
he ſwore,
That tooth-ach, gout, and corns ſhould be no
more.
In vain his drugs as well as birch he tried;
His boys grew blockheads, and his patients died.

Blackmore was weak enough to abuſe Pope, and by that means procured himſelf a place amongſt his reſpectable brethren in the Dunciad.

2. Peace is my dear delight—not Fleury's more;
But touch me, and no miniſter ſo ſore.
Whoe'er offends, at ſome unlucky time
Slides into verſe, and hitches in a rhyme;
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the ſad burthen of ſome merry ſong *.

Theſe lines are very beautiful, and ſuperior to thoſe of Horace †. No poet was

* Verſe 75.

† ——————— O pater et rex,
Jupiter, ut pereat poſitum rubigine telum,

Nec

was ever more ſevere in his revenge than Pope; but yet it muſt be confeſſed that he ſeldom ridiculed any perſons without ſome reaſon. The Dunciad is a laſting monument of infamy to that ſet of hardened dunces, many even of whoſe very names are now buried in oblivion. In one remarkable inſtance, however, Mr. Pope thought proper, and with great judgment, to anſwer an attack, in proſe. It ſeems that Lord Harvey wrote a libel in verſe againſt him, entitled, *An Epiſtle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton Court*, which was publiſhed in 1733. Pope underſtanding who was the author of it, anſwered it in proſe,

Nec quiſquam noceat cupido mihi pacis! at ille
Qui me commorit (melius non tangere, clamo)
Flebit, et inſignis tota cantabitur urbe.

But the laſt of theſe lines is extremely beautiful and ſevere.

but

but kept his anſwer ſome time in manuſcript, with an intention to publiſh it after his friends had read it. His Lordſhip, being informed that Pope had anſwered him with a great deal of ſeverity, endeavoured, by ſeveral means, to get a ſight of the manuſcript before it was publiſhed, but without effect. He then applied himſelf to the Queen, who, to oblige him, borrowed the manuſcript of Mr. Pope, and ſhewed it to his Lordſhip. Harvey was exceſſively chagrined at the ſeverity of the anſwer, and ſufficiently humbled. He begged of her Majeſty to uſe all her intereſt with Pope to prevent its being publiſhed; for which purpoſe the Queen ordered a perſon to ſpeak to him, who aſſured him that his anſwer had had effect enough, as my Lord Harvey had ſeen it; and was exceſſively ſorry for having given the provocation,

cation, and moreover asked Mr. Pope's pardon. Pope hereupon promised the Queen, on his word of honour, not to publish it; but however left it in the power of his executor to do it after his death; and accordingly Dr. Warburton published it at the end of the ninth volume of his edition of his works. The letter, tho' wrote with great temper, is excessively poignant: but his Lordship was ridiculed with infinite wit under the name of Sporus.

From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
P--x'd by her love, or libell'd by her hate *.

There are many instances of Pope's making open professions of his friendship, to those very persons he lashed with the utmost severity in his satires. Addi-

* Verse 84.

son

ſon is a remarkable one; and Lady M. W. Montagne another. I have been often informed that by Sappho is meant that celebrated Lady. Some of his letters to her ſeem to be full of tenderneſs and affection for her, and breathe the language of the ſincereſt friendſhip. One of them is indeed remarkable for a mixed kind of praiſe and cenſure: he ſeems in one paſſage to give an oblique daſh at her Ladyſhip's chaſtity; "Glory, the only pay of generous actions, is now as ill paid as other juſt debts; and neither Mrs. Macfarland for immolating her lover, nor you for conſtancy to your Lord, muſt ever hope to be compared to Lucretia or Portia."

Then follows twenty moſt brilliant compliments to her face and underſtanding, and another ſtroke as good as the former;

former; "Laſtly, I ſhall hear how, the firſt night you lay at Pera, you had a viſion of Mahomet's paradiſe; and happily awaked without a ſoul, from which bleſſed moment the beautiful body was left at full liberty to perform all the agreeable functions it was made for."

The converſation, wit, poetry, and adventures of this moſt accompliſhed woman, are well known; ſhe indulged herſelf in freedoms, which with her management gave a brilliancy to her character among the principal perſons of her time: her Town Eclogues, and other ſmall poems, are full of wit and fire, and the verſification eaſy and harmonious: I don't remember ſeeing the few following lines in print; they are an extempore epigram on ſeeing a picture of General Churchill.

Woe

Woe to the man that's aged ſixty-four,
Unfit for love, unwilling to give o'er;
A very fleſh-fly, hov'ring on the wing,
Awake to buzz, but not alive to ſting.
Bold where he cannot, backward where he can,
The teizing ghoſt of the departed man.

Her Ladyſhip's travels have been lately publiſhed; and certainly are the moſt entertaining and ſprightly relations ever wrote. Never was any thing more eaſy or more elegant than the letters, the language ever lively and ſpirited; full of the moſt pleaſing turns, and in ſhort a charming ſtile: her obſervations are all new and penetrating, and her painting every where ſo glowing and animated, as to place every object ſhe deſcribes full before our eyes.

The obligations we are under to her for the practice of inoculation, are great

and laſting; few travellers bring home with them ſo valuable a preſent for their countries, but her genius made her examine into all the cuſtoms of the Turks; and this exotic admirable plant, which at preſent flouriſhes here ſo vigorouſly, was tranſplanted by this celebrated woman.

In the beginning of the ſecond ſatire, gluttony is very finely ridiculed, and the character of Avidien marked with many ſatirical touches that work it up to a fine pitch of humour.

On morning wings how active ſprings the mind,
That leaves the load of yeſterday behind?
How eaſy ev'ry labour it purſues?
How coming to the poet ev'ry muſe *?

I hardly know in the Engliſh language a more beautiful line than the firſt of

* Verſe 80.

theſe

theſe four: they are all very good, but that is far more noble than the

Alter ubi dicto citius curata ſopori
Membra dedit, vegetus præſcripta ad munia ſurgit,

of Horace. In the firſt epiſtle the following lines are excellent:

Well, but the poor——The poor have the ſame itch;
They change their weekly barber, weekly news,
Prefer a new japanner to their ſhoes,
Diſcharge their garrets, move their beds, and run
(*They know not whither*) *in a chaiſe and one*;
They hire their ſculler, and when once aboard,
Grow ſick, and damn the climate——like a lord *.

This piece of ſatire againſt a foible ſo common in the world is as juſt as it is beautiful, and much more ſpirited than the original. How often do we ſee

* Verſe 155.

people of no extraction, on the leaſt acceſſion of wealth, give themſelves all the airs which the dulleſt ſpirit of mimicking their betters can dictate.

For, mark th' advantage; juſt ſo many ſcore
Will gain a wife, with half as many more,
Procure her beauty, make that beauty chaſte,
And then ſuch friends——as cannot fail to laſt †.

The laſt of theſe lines is excellent. The Rambler ſpeaks very ſenſibly of the abſurdity of friendſhip that is not natural. Every man muſt have remarked, ſays he, the facility with which the kindneſs of others is ſometimes gained by thoſe to whom he never could have imparted his own. We are by our occupations, education, and habits of life, divided almoſt into different ſpecies, which regard one another for the moſt part with

† Verſe 77. Ep. vi.

ſcorn

ſcorn and malignity. Each of the claſſes of the human race has deſires, fears, and converſation, vexations and merriment, peculiar to itſelf; cares which another cannot feel; pleaſures which he cannot partake; and modes of expreſſing every ſenſation which he cannot underſtand. That frolick which ſhakes one man with laughter, will convulſe another with indignation; the ſtrains of jocularity which in one place obtains treats and patronage, would in another be heard with indifference, and in a third with abhorrence †.

1. Sure fate of all, beneath whoſe riſing ray
Each ſtar of meaner merit fades away!
Oppreſs'd we feel the beam directly beat,
Thoſe ſuns of glory pleaſe not till they ſet ‡.

Theſe noble lines are truly ſublime, and moſt admirably imitated from the

† Rambler, Vol. iv. No. 160.

‡ Book II. Ep. i. verſe 19.

original. It is a melancholy reflection, that envy is ſo often and univerſally able to bear down the greateſt merit. 'Tis death only that ſilences the voice of calumny: when the world has loſt its brighteſt jewels, we recollect their vaſt, but unrewarded deſerts.

2. But for the wits of either Charles's days,
The mob of gentlemen who wrote with eaſe;
Sprat, Carew, Sedley, and a hundred more,
(Like twinkling ſtars the miſcellanies o'er)
One ſimile that ſolitary ſhines
In the dry deſart of a thouſand lines,
Or lengthen'd thought that gleams thro' many a page,
Has ſanctify'd whole poems for an age. *

Nothing can be more abſurd than to ſuppoſe the reign of Charles II. was the Auguſtan age in England. But the coarſeneſs of the dramatic pieces that were exhibited on the opening of the theatre

* Verſe 107.

theatre at the reſtoration, may be eaſily accounted for, when we conſider how natural it was for the people after being deprived ſo long of the pleaſures of the ſtage, to ſwallow with greedineſs every production of pleaſantry and humour. And indeed even the court itſelf encouraged the moſt abſurd extravagance and folly in the repreſentations on the theatre ‡. Charles himſelf poſſeſſed great humour and ſome taſte; but whether it was owing to the negligence of his diſpoſition, or the want of generoſity, he certainly was far from being an encourager of polite literature. The exceſſive licentiouſneſs of his court obſtructed its progreſs. There are many inſtances of the King's want of li-

‡ The Rehearſal of the Duke of Buckingham expoſed with a fine ſpirit of ridicule theſe wild productions of folly, and partly corrected the vicious taſte of the nation.

liberality in rewarding literary merit. The royal cause received vaſt advantage from Hudibras, and Charles himſelf admired that work; but yet he let Butler, who was a man of an unexceptionable character, die in want. Dryden, it is well known, could never procure ſuch an eſtabliſhment as might have exempted him from the neceſſity of writing for bread. The celebrated Otway, who was a royaliſt, and one of the fineſt geniuſes of the age, could not even procure bread by his writings, and had the ſingular fate of dying literally of hunger *. Theſe inſtances

* Otway, whoſe delicacy would not permit him to borrow ſmall ſums, was driven to the utmoſt neceſſity. He ventured at laſt out of his lurking-place, almoſt naked and ſhivering, and went into a coffee-houſe on Tower-Hill, where he ſaw a gentleman of whom he had ſome knowledge, and of whom he ſolicited the loan of a ſhilling. The gentle-

inſtances throw a dark ſhade over the character of Charles II. whoſe conduct

gentleman was quite ſhocked to ſee the author of Venice Preſerved begging bread; and compaſſionately put into his hand a guinea. Mr. Otway having thanked his benefactor, retired, and purchaſed a roll; as his ſtomach was full of wind by exceſs of faſting, the firſt mouthful choaked him, and inſtantaneouſly put a period to his miſerable days. Illiberal abuſe has too often been thrown on men who wrote for bread. If heroes and patriots conſtitute the firſt column of national glory, authors of genius conſtitute the ſecond: and if England has produced a Sackville, a Bacon, a Raleigh, a Greville, a Selden, a Harrington, a Hyde, a Sheffield, an Aſhley-Cooper, a Boyle, a Granville, &c. who did not write for bread, it has alſo produced other writers as eminent, who did; and of whom ſome, to the eternal diſgrace of all our national pretenſions to generoſity and humanity, died for want of it.

Mr. Oldmixon perhaps will not be admitted as one of theſe; and yet his merits as a party-writer,

duct was compared with great diſad-
vantage to that of his cotemporary
Lewis

writer, his connections with the famed *profeſſor of politicks*, and *Philanthropy* of Pall-Mall, and his ſubmitting to labour at the preſs like a horſe in the mill, till he became as blind and as wretched, ought to have been, what they were not, ſo many preſervatives from the accumulation of miſeries which befel him in his old age, when he ſtood moſt in need of conſolation.

But Mr. Sale, tranſlator of the Koran, and author of the oriental articles in the Univerſal Hiſtory, might be compared to the phœnix in all but this, that he did not leave a ſucceſſor behind him; and yet ſuch were his diſtreſſes, that he often wanted a ſecond ſhirt, and was often obliged to the firſt friend he could find for the meal of the day. How different his fate from that of a certain prelate deceaſed, who, on the credit of a ſingle ſermon (for though he printed two, the laſt was but a haſh of the firſt) had the good luck to become the head of his order?

If we had a Shakeſpeare, a Milton, or a Newton,

Lewis XIV. whoſe liberality to the learned of all Europe has been ſo highly

ton, now exiſting amongſt us, who ſhould come into what is *called* good company in dirty linen for want of clean; and a Charteris, a Laſcelles, a Lowther, a Walters, or a Craſtein, out of forddidneſs did the ſame, merely to ſave the charge of waſhing, the latter would be courted and careſſed, and the former would hardly be acknowledged; the moſt notorious abuſe of wealth not being able to render the abuſer contemptible, or talents the moſt ſublime to render poverty otherwiſe.

Poor Amhurſt! after having been the drudge of his party for the beſt part of twenty years together, was as much forgot in the famous compromiſe of 1742, as if he had never been born!—And when he died of what is called a broken heart, which happened within a few months afterwards, became indebted to the charity of his very bookſeller for a grave.—A grave not to be traced now, becauſe no otherwiſe to be diſtinguiſhed, than

highly celebrated. Dryden and Otway were the two greateſt geniuſes that appeared in this reign. Rocheſter's indecency clouds all his works, but he had a genius finely turned for ſatire. The Duke of Buckingham was celebrated for his Rehearſal; and the Earls of Mulgrave, Dorſet, and Roſcommon, were writers of taſte; but their compoſitions want both energy and ſpirit. The ſame may be ſaid of the Marquis of Halifax, who would have been a good writer if he had had leiſure to cultivate his genius. Sir William Temple, ſays the ingenious Mr. Hume, is almoſt the only

than by the freſhneſs of the turf, borrowed from the next common to cover it *.

Caſe of Authors, p. 3.

* Mr. M——, his fellow labourer in another excellent paper, called Common Senſe, by marrying a woman of fortune, was put into a condition of laughing at the ingratitude he alſo experienced on the ſame occaſion.

one,

one, who kept himſelf altogether unpolluted by that inundation of vice and licentiouſneſs, which overwhelmed the nation. The ſtile of this author, though extremely negligent, and even mixed with foreign idioms, is agreeable and intereſting. That mixture of vanity, which appears in his works, is rather a recommendation to them. By means of it, we enter into acquaintance with the character of the author, full of honour and humanity; and fancy that we are engaged, not in the peruſal of a book, but in converſation with a companion*.

To what I have here ſaid concerning the bad taſte which prevailed during the reign of Charles II. I ſhall only add, that nothing can be a ſtronger argument

* Hiſt. of Great Brit. vol. ii. p. 454.

to

to ſtrengthen theſe opinions, than the neglect of the Paradiſe Loſt during this period. Milton never enjoyed in his life-time the reputation he deſerved. He had been deeply engaged with the fanatics in the preceding reign, and had even proſtituted his pen in theological controverſy. This ſo far blinded the nation, that they never perceived the immenſe merit of that performance. Having got his poem licenced for the preſs, he could ſell the copy for no more than fifteen pounds, the payment of which depended on the ſale of three numerous impreſſions *. Lord Somers, that noble patron of polite learning, brought it into ſome reputation, by publiſhing a good edition of it about twenty years after the

† Vide Life of Milton, prefixed to Fenton's 12mo edit. p. 22.

author's

author's death. Whitlocke * talks of one Milton, as he calls him, a blind man, who was employed in tranſlating a treaty with Sweden into Latin. Theſe forms of expreſſion are amuſing to poſterity, who conſider how obſcure Whitlocke himſelf, though lord-keeper and ambaſſador, and indeed a man of great ability and merit, has become in compariſon of Milton †.

3. Then

* P. 633. and quoted by Hume, vol. ii. p. 126.

† Mr. Walpole ſays very juſtly, "One is amazed at hearing the age of Charles the Second called polite: becauſe the preſbyterians and religioniſts had affected to call every thing by a ſcripture name, the new court affected to call every thing by its own name. That court had no pretenſions to politeneſs, but by its reſemblance to another age, which called its own groſſneſs polite, the age of Ariſtophanes. Would a Scythian have been civilized by the Athenian ſtage, or a Hottentot by the drawing-room of Charles the Second?

3. Then marble ſoften'd into life grew warm,
And yielding metal flow'd to human form.

Theſe two beautiful lines deſcribe the art of ſculpture in a fine manner; that noble art, which is ſo little inferior to painting in the works of many of the antient ſtatuaries. In their admirable hands marble might well be ſaid to *ſoften into life*, ſince their imitations were ſo wonderfully expreſſive. The Greek artiſts carried ſculpture to ſuch a height of perfection, that one can hardly be doubtful of the merit of their painting: yet ſeveral critics have diſputed their

Second? The characters and anecdotes being forgot, the ſtate-poems of that time are a heap of ſenſeleſs ribaldry, ſcarcely in rhime, and more ſeldom in metre. When ſatyrs were brought to court, no wonder the graces would not truſt themſelves there.

Calat. of Roy. and Nob. Auth. vol. ii. p. 44.

excel-

excellency in that ſiſter art with great warmth: the ingenious Mr. Webb places them even above the modern painters, and ranks Apelles as the greateſt that ever exiſted. But in ſculpture their ſuperiority is confeſſed by all mankind: they treated ſome ſubjects with prodigious ſucceſs, which could ſcarce be thought proper for the art; and thoſe which aided their genius ſhine to this day as monuments of their infinite invention and amazing execution.

4. Lely on animated canvas ſtole
The ſleepy eye, that ſpoke the melting ſoul.

Lely preferred in almoſt all his faces a languiſhing air, long eyes, and a drowſy ſweetneſs peculiar to himſelf; for which the critics reckon him a manneriſt, and that he retained a little of the

greeniſh caſt in his complexions, not eaſily forgetting the colours he had uſed in his landſcapes; which laſt fault, how true ſoever at firſt, it is well known he left off in his latter days *. But whatever of this kind may be objected againſt this great painter, it is certain that his works are in great eſteem abroad, as well as here, and they are both equally valued and envied. He had an original manner of painting the landſcapes in his own pictures. He was likewiſe a good hiſtory-painter, as many pieces among us can ſhow. His crayon drafts are alſo admirable, and are commonly reckoned the moſt valuable of his pieces. Lely, in his younger days, was very deſirous to finiſh the courſe of his ſtudies in Italy; but being hindered

* De Piles's Lives of the Painters, p. 403.

from

from going thither by the great buſineſs he was perpetually involved in, he reſolved to make himſelf amends, by getting the beſt drawings, prints, and paintings of the moſt celebrated Italian hands. This he ſet about ſo induſtriouſly, that at length he obtained what he ſought after, and may well be ſaid to have had the beſt choſen collection of any of his time. Among theſe we muſt reckon the better part of the Arundel collection, which he had from that family, many of the drawings whereof were ſold at prodigious rates at his death, bearing upon them his uſual mark of P. L. What advantage he had from this expedient, may ſufficiently appear by that wonderful ſtile in painting, which he acquired by his daily converſing with the works of thoſe great men. In his correct draft and beautiful colouring,

but more eſpecially in the graceful airs of his heads, and the pleaſing variety of his poſtures, together with the gentle and looſe management of the draperies, he excelled moſt of his predeceſſors, and will be a laſting pattern to all ſucceeding artiſts.

5. Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verſe, the full reſounding line,
The long majeſtic march, and energy divine *.

Few of Waller's poetic pieces are moving, not even thoſe that are wrote on the ſubject of love, and to the ladies he admired. They are but ingenious trifles. Of his more ſerious poems, the panegyric on Cromwel is compoſed with more force than any of his other pieces; and his poem to Charles I. on his danger,

* Verſe 267.

when

when prince, in the road of St. Andero, is wrote with ſome ſpirit; but his divine poetry has hardly the leaſt ſpark of elevation or fire. But notwithſtanding this criticiſm, the Engliſh language is greatly obliged to him; few writers before his time had compoſed in a ſmooth and poliſhed ſtile; but Waller was ſo exact in his choice of words, that his poetry at this day contains very few obſolete ones. The harmony, ſoftneſs, and rhyme in his poems make them more generally read at preſent than the greater part of the works of his cotemporaries. In ſhort, Waller was a man of wit and ingenuity; but his poetry does not contain any ſtrokes either of the ſublime or pathetic †.

Pope

† Charles II. on Waller's preſenting him a copy of verſes in his praiſe, reproached him with

Pope made Dryden his model in the art of verſification. The Engliſh language can ſcarce produce any numbers more har-

not writing with ſo much energy and fire, as when he had applauded the uſurper: " Sir, replied Waller to the King, We poets ſucceed better in fiction than in truth."

On a beaucoup entendu parler du celebre Waller en France. Mr. de la Fontaine, St. Evremond, & Bayle ont faits ſon eloge; mais on ne connoit de lui que ſon nom. Il eut à Londres la meme reputation que Voiture eut à Paris, & je crois qu'il la meritoit mieux. Voiture vint dans un tems ou l'on ſortoit de la barbarie, & ou l'on étoit encore dans l'ignorance. On vouloit avoir de l'eſprit, & on n'en avoit point encore. On cherchoit des tours en lieu de penſées. Les faux brillans ſe trouvent plus aiſément que les pierres precieuſes. Voiture né avec un genie frivole & facile, fut le premier qui brilla dans cette aurore de la literature Françoiſe. S'il étoit venu apres les grands hommes qui ont illuſtré le ſiecle de Louis XIV. on il auroit

harmonious and noble than those of this great man in some of his poems; parti-

roit été inconnu, ou on n'auroit parlé de lui que pour le mépriſer, ou il auroit corrigé ſon ſtile. Mr. Deſpreaux le loue, mais c'eſt dans ſes premieres ſatires, c'eſt dans le tems que le gout de Deſpreaux n'étoit pas encore formé : il étoit jeune & dans l'age ou l'on juge des hommes par la reputation, & non pas par eux memes. D'ailleurs, Mr. Deſpreaux étoit ſouvent bien injuſte dans ſes loüanges & dans ſes cenſures. Il loüoit Segrais que perſonne ne lit, il inſultoit Quinault que tout le monde ſçait par cœur, & il ne dit rien de la Fontaine. Waller meilleur que Voiture, n'étoit pas encore parfait. Ses ouvrages galans reſpirent la grace, mais la negligence les fait languir, & ſouvent les penſées fauſſes les defigurent. Les Anglois n'étoient pas encore parvenus de ſon tems à écrire avec correction. Ses ouvrages ſerieux ſont pleins d'une vigueur qu'on n'attendroit pas de la molleſſe de ſes autres pieces. Il a fait un éloge funebre de Cromwel, qui avec ſes defauts paſſe pour un chef d'œuvre. Lettres ſur les Anglois, p. 188.

cularly many lines in his Abſalom and Achitophel, his fables, and ſome ſpeeches to be met with here and there in his tragedies. His noble and original ode I have ſpoke of already; that piece alone would have rendered the memory of Dryden immortal *. I hardly know any poet whoſe works are, in general, ſo unequal. The poems which I have mentioned above, and ſome few others, are excellent; but as for his dramatic pieces, they are almoſt the refuſe of the Engliſh language. His tranſlations are performed with ſpirit, and bear many marks of the genius of Dryden; but they are too incorrect, and were rather the offspring of neceſſity, than of leiſure and reflection.

6. O you!

* His prologues, for which he was ſo famous, are wrote with an infinite deal of wit and humour; few ſince his time have equalled them.

6. O you! whom Vanity's light bark conveys
On Fame's mad voyage by the wind of praiſe,
With what a ſhifting gale your courſe you ply,
For ever ſunk too low, or borne too high!
Who pants for glory finds but ſhort repoſe,
A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows.

Nothing can be more beautiful than theſe lines on the vanity of fame. Mr. Johnſon has an obſervation on the ſame ſubject, which is worthy of being quoted. "It is long before we are convinced of the ſmall proportion which every individual bears to the collective body of mankind; or learn how few can be intereſted in the fortune of any ſingle man; how little vacancy is left in the world for any new object of attention; to how ſmall extent the brighteſt blaze of merit can be ſpread amidſt the miſts of buſineſs and of folly; and how ſoon it is clouded

by

by the intervention of other novelties. Not only the writer of books, but the commander of armies, and the deliverer of nations, will eaſily out-live all noiſy and popular reputation: he may be celebrated for a time by the public voice, but his actions and his name will ſoon be conſidered as remote and unaffecting, and be rarely mentioned but by thoſe whoſe alliance gives them ſome vanity to gratify by frequent commemoration. It ſeems not to be ſufficiently conſidered how little renown can be admitted in the world. Mankind are kept perpetually buſy by their fears or deſires, and have not more leiſure from their own affairs, than to acquaint themſelves with the accidents of the current day. Engaged in contriving ſome refuge from calamity, or in ſhortening the way to ſome new poſſeſſion, they ſeldom ſuffer their thoughts to wander

wander to the paſt or future; none but a few ſolitary ſtudents have leiſure to enquire into the claims of antient heroes or ſages, and names which hoped to range over kingdoms and continents, ſhrink at laſt into cloiſters or colleges. Nor is it certain, that even of theſe dark and narrow habitations, theſe laſt retreats of fame, the poſſeſſion will be long kept. Of men devoted to literature, very few extend their views beyond ſome particular ſcience, and the greater part ſeldom enquire, even in their own profeſſion, for any authors, but thoſe whom the preſent mode of ſtudy happens to force upon their notice; they deſire not to fill their minds with unfaſhionable knowledge, but contentedly reſign to oblivion thoſe books which they now find cenſured or neglected. The hope of

fame

fame is neceſſarily connected with ſuch conſiderations as muſt abate the ardor of confidence, and repreſs the vigour of purſuit. Whoever claims renown from any kind of excellence, expects to fill the place which is now poſſeſſed by another; for there are already names of every claſs ſufficient to employ all that will deſire to remember them; and ſurely he that is puſhing his predeceſſors into the gulph of obſcurity, cannot but ſometimes ſuſpect that he muſt himſelf ſink in like manner, and, as he ſtands upon the ſame precipice, be ſwept away with the ſame violence *.

To theſe grave and manly obſervations, I cannot but add the following little imagined anecdote.

* Rambler, vol. iii. Numb. 146.

A Chineſe who had long ſtudied the works of Confucius, who knew the characters of fourteen thouſand words, and could read a great part of every book that came in his way, once took it into his head to travel into Europe, and obſerve the cuſtoms of a people, whom he thought not very much inferior, even to his own countrymen, in the arts of refining upon every pleaſure. Upon his arrival at Amſterdam, his paſſion for letters naturally led him to a bookſeller's ſhop; as he could ſpeak a little Dutch, he civilly aſked the bookſeller for the immortal Ilixofon. The bookſeller aſſured him he had never heard the book mentioned before. "What, have you never heard of that immortal poet (returned the other much ſurprized) that light of the eyes, that favourite of kings, that

roſe

roſe of perfection? I ſuppoſe you know nothing of the immortal Fipſihihi, ſecond couſin to the moon?" "Nothing at all indeed, Sir," (returned the other.) "Alas! (cries our traveller) to what purpoſe, then, has one of them faſted to death, and the other offered himſelf up as a ſacrifice to the Tartarean enemy, to gain a renown which has never travelled beyond the precincts of China?"*

7. Let me for once preſume t'inſtruct the times;
To know the poet from the man of rhymes:
'Tis he, who gives my breaſt a thouſand pains,
Can make me feel each paſſion that he feigns;
Inrage, compoſe, with more than magic art,
With pity and with terror tear my heart;
And ſnatch me o'er the earth, or through the air,
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and where.

This is a noble deſcription of the true poet; but no man whoſe talents border

* Bee.

rather

rather on taſte and correctneſs, than the original fire of genius, will come under the definition. Homer and Pindar among the antients, and Shakeſpear among the moderns, excel all mankind in this admirable and truly poetic art.

Homer places the ſcene of action and his heroes immediately before our eyes, and we are carried away by the impetuoſity of his invention: and Shakeſpear, with the moſt wonderful art, penetrates our very ſouls, and impreſſes every paſſion moſt irreſiſtibly in the hearts of his readers. Such are the effects of true poetry: whether thoſe of painting and muſic are greater, has long been a diſpute among the critics. Some very ingenious men have been warm advocates for painting, and others for muſic: if conſidered merely as imitations, poetry is undoubtedly

edly the moſt excellent, contains the greateſt variety of powers, and paints objects, characters, paſſion, and ſentiments, which neither of her ſiſter arts can approach to. It is true indeed, that beſides what is done by poetry, there is ſome idea of character, which even painting can communicate. Thus there is no doubt, but that ſuch a countenance may be found by painters for Æneas, as would convey upon view a mild, humane, and yet a brave diſpoſition. But then this idea would be vague and general. It would be concluded, only in the groſs, that the hero was good. As to that ſyſtem of qualities peculiar to Æneas only, and which alone *properly conſtitutes his true and real character*, this would ſtill remain a ſecret, and be no way diſcoverable. For how deduce it from the mere lineaments of a countenance! Or,

if

If it were deducible, how few ſpectators would there be found ſo ſagacious? It is here, therefore, that recourſe muſt be had, not to painting, but to poetry. So accurate a conception of character can be gathered only from a *ſucceſſion of various, and yet conſiſtent actions*; a ſucceſſion, *enabling us to conjecture*, what the perſon of the drama will do in the future, from what already he has done in the paſt. Now, to ſuch an imitation poetry only is equal; becauſe it is not bounded, like painting, to ſhort, and, as it were, inſtant events, but may imitate ſubjects of any duration whatever †.

The ingenious Mr. Webb juſtly obſerves, that "the variety and force of our ſentiments, particularly in the pa-

† Harris's Three Treatiſes, p. 91.

thetic, muſt depend on the variety and nature of their motives. In this the painter is extremely confined; for among the infinite turns and workings of the mind, which may be expreſſed by words, and become the ſprings of ſentiments, there are ſo few to which he can give a ſhape or being, and his indications of peculiar and characteriſtic feelings are ſo vague and undeciſive, that his expreſſions, like their motives, muſt be obvious and general *.

If Painting be inferior to Poetry, Muſic, conſidered as an imitative art, muſt be greatly inferior to Painting; for as Muſic has no means of explaining the motives of its various impreſſions, its imitations of the Manners and Paſſions muſt

* Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry, p. 102.

be

be extremely vague and undeciſive: for inſtance, the tender and melting tones which may be expreſſive of the paſſion of Love, will be equally in uniſon with the collateral feelings of Benevolence, Friendſhip, Pity, and the like.—Again, how are we to diſtinguiſh the rapid movements of Anger, from thoſe of Terror, Diſtraction, and all the violent agitations of the ſoul? But let Poetry co-operate with Muſic, and ſpecify the motive of each particular impreſſion, we are no longer at a loſs; we acknowledge the agreement of the ſound with the idea, and general impreſſions become ſpecific indications of the Manners and the Paſſions *.

In reſpect to the effects of theſe three arts in moving the paſſions, it is diffi-

* Ibid.

cult to decide which is ſuperior; and thoſe who have given the preference to particular ones, only deſcribe their own taſtes; and this point depends almoſt entirely on the different fancies of individuals. That poetry has a power over the paſſions, every one muſt be ſenſible. Many ſublime paſſages are there which lift the ſoul to aim at heroiſm and greatneſs; pathetic ones, that melt us into pity: the very reading of ſome tragedies diſplay the power of the poet to turn and wind our paſſions as he will. He infuſes into our minds every movement of ſentiment and affection which beſt ſuits his purpoſe: we rage with fury, burn with revenge, or melt with love. From the moſt impaſſioned ſtate of mind he penetrates our hearts with all the ſoft feelings of compaſſion and benevolence. In one word, poetry indubitably contains the ſeveral

veral powers of eloquence, painting, and muſic—although there are *ſome ſubjects* in which the picture of an action is much more ſtriking than the deſcription of it; and there are alſo ſome few paſſions which muſic may imitate to ſuch perfection as to rival poetry; but this is more doubtful.

That painting can make great impreſſions on the mind, muſt be acknowledged by all. There are more inſtances than one to be met with in hiſtory of this kind, and ſuch as diſplay its powers very evidently.—A Picture, ſays Quintilian, a ſilent and uniform addreſs, yet penetrates ſo deeply into our inmoſt affections, that it ſeems often to exceed even the powers of eloquence *. We

* Pictura, tacens opus & habitus ſemper ejuſdem, ſic in intimos penetrat affectus, ut ipſam vim dicendi nonnunquam ſuperare videatur.

cannot doubt, ſays Mr. Webb, the ſincerity of this deciſion, if we conſider the character of the perſon from whom it comes. Cicero was equally ſenſible of the powers of the pencil, and often ſets them in competition with thoſe of his favourite art. Their effects are ſometimes wonderful. It is ſaid that Alexander trembled and grew pale, on ſeeing a picture of Palamedes betrayed to death by his friends; it bringing to his mind a ſtinging remembrance of his treatment of Ariſtonicus. Portia could bear with an unſhaken conſtancy her laſt ſeparation from Brutus; but when ſhe ſaw, ſome hours after, a picture of the parting of Hector and Andromache, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears: full as ſeemed her ſorrow, the painter ſuggeſted new ideas of grief, or impreſſed more ſtrongly her own.

I have ſomewhere met with a pretty ſtory of an Athenian courtezan, who, in the midſt of a riotous banquet with her lovers, accidentally caſt her eye on the portrait of a philoſopher that hung oppoſite to her ſeat: the happy character of temperance and virtue ſtruck her with ſo lively an image of her own unworthineſs, that ſhe inſtantly quitted the room; and returning home became ever after an example of temperance, as ſhe had been before of debauchery. You might tax me with doing injuſtice to the preſent times, were I to draw all my proofs from the antient: I appeal therefore to yourſelf, who have had an opportunity to prove it, whether you could look on the death of Germanicus, as painted by Pouſſin, without feeling a generous indignation at the cruelty of his oppreſſor,

and an equal compaſſion for unhappy virtue. The repreſentation of a plague by the ſame author, melts the ſoul into a tender participation of human miſeries: Theſe impreſſions end not here; they give a turn to the mind advantageous to ſociety; every argument of ſorrow, every object of diſtreſs, renews the ſame ſoft vibrations, and quickens us to acts of humanity and benevolence *.

The powers which are juſtly due to muſic are as well known as univerſally allowed. Its powers, ſays Sir William Temple, are either felt or known by all men, and are allowed to work ſtrangely upon the mind and the body, the paſſions and the blood; to raiſe joy and grief, to give pleaſure and pain, to cure

* See Mr. Webb on Painting, p. 34.

diſeaſes,

diſeaſes, and the mortal ſting of the tarantula; to give motions to the feet as well as the heart, to compoſe diſturbed thoughts, to aſſiſt and heighten devotion itſelf. We need no recourſe to the fables of Orpheus and Amphion, or the force of their muſic upon fiſhes and beaſts; 'tis enough that we find the charming of ſerpents, and the cure or allay of an evil ſpirit or poſſeſſion attributed to it in ſacred writ *.

Athenæus, and Capella, have preſerved a vaſt variety of inſtances of the prodigious effects of the antient muſic; the power which it has over us, ſays Macrobius, is ſo great, that thoſe who ſound our military inſtruments, ſtrike up a proper air for exciting our courage,

* Sir W. Temple of Poetry, vol. 1. p. 235.

when

when we are led to the charge; whereas, they play one of an oppoſite character when we are called off to a retreat. Symphonies inflame us, divert us, diſturb us, and even lull us to ſleep. They likewiſe calm our minds, and afford us comfort under our bodily afflictions and diſorders †.

However, we may very juſtly ſuppoſe, that theſe great effects which have ſo often reſulted from this moſt captivating art, were the united efforts of both poetry and muſic: for it is beyond all doubt,

† Ita denique omnis habitus animæ cantibus gubernatur, ut ad bellum progreſſui, & item receptui canatur, cantu & excitante & rurſus ſedante virtutem. Dat ſomnos adimitque, necnon curas immittit & retrahit, iram ſuggerit, clementiam ſuadet. Corporum quoque morbis medetur. Macrob. in ſomn. Scipionis, lib. 2. cap. 2.

that

that by far the moſt aſtoniſhing powers are the produce of this union; which indeed may be guided by a ſkilful hand to the promoting every noble and pleaſing virtue.

Let us imagine, ſays Mr. Moor, at the famous feaſt of Alexander, that the hand, the voice, and the words of Timotheus, had been directed by a Socrates; what a glorious triumph might muſic, as we may well ſuppoſe, have gained on ſuch an occaſion! Timotheus, inſtead of poſſeſſing Alexander with the brutal madneſs of revenge, might have inſpired him with the divine enthuſiaſm of benevolence; inſtead of making him ruſh like a fury to burn a noble city, he might have rouſed him like a hero to ſome godlike act of goodneſs. The breaſt of the man,

man, who could be made to feel ſo tender a pity for the fate of his enemy the King of Perſia, might have been as eaſily ſoftened into a generous regret for the miſery he had brought upon the Greeks. Thoſe tears which he ſhed for the calamities of Darius, whom he could not recall to life, this great maſter of the power of muſic might have changed into remorſe for the deſtruction of Thebes, and tranſported the Macedonian into an immediate vow of releaſing the Grecians from the bondage in which he then held them. And thus Alexander, inſtead of ſnatching up a torch, like a Demon from hell, to burn the imperial ſeat of the monarchs of Aſia, would have riſen like a god, to proclaim liberty and independence to the moſt generous ſpirited people in the world.

Such

Such being the reſpective powers of theſe three admirable arts, it is a new enquiry which ſpeaks moſt forcibly to the paſſions: an enquiry of curioſity, rather than utility. As it muſt depend on the taſte of the perſon who decides ſuch a queſtion, it muſt remain the mere opinion of every individual. If I may venture to hazard one, I ſhould apprehend that each art has its peculiar and ſuperior excellence. 1. Poetry will ever be miſtreſs of the ſtrongeſt impreſſions, which are the reſult of a concatenation of various effects, drawn to any length of compoſition; and alſo in ſhort imitations of thoſe ſubjects which are not adapted to the genius of the other two arts.

For inſtance, in the characters of Hector and Lear, the muſician can give us

no

no character in his ſounds; the painter may, in a long ſeries of a multitude of pieces, paint the chief actions of Hector's life; but this is a ſuppoſition too extended, it is beyond his art to intereſt us in his favour, by diſplaying all the amiable traits in his character, and his very ſentiments on particular occaſions. This is the poet's province; and from ſuch a combination of images, and ſuch a variety of ſtrokes, he intereſts us to ſuch a degree for him as to have our paſſions at his command. There are ſeveral ſtrokes in Lear, which are yet more to my purpoſe. The reader recollects that pathetic one, "*I gave you all!*" which painting could not expreſs otherwiſe, than by giving the old man a very moving countenance, which muſt be expreſſive of a great many different

ferent emotions; the painter could not vary the features for both that and another——"*Pray do not mock me*," and alſo ſeveral others, all eſſentially different.

2. Painting is ſuperior to either, in the repreſentation of any perſonages unaffected by paſſions, or the delineation of an emotion or paſſion, which diſplays itſelf in a characteriſtical, immediate, and peculiar manner in the countenance, in conſequence of an action.

Several inſtances of this may be produced, particularly in deſcription. I apprehend the fineſt in the world cannot equal Titian's naked Venus lying on a bed, holding a branch of flowers in one hand, the other falling negligently before her. The ſight of this picture warms the

the paſſions far more than any deſcription; and the imitation of painting will always be moſt perfect, in the repreſentation of ſingle figures employed in an action not complex; for inſtead of imitating by words, which are but ſigns of our ideas, it preſents the object immediately to our ſenſes. The choice of Paris, Venus attiring by the graces, &c. &c. are therefore ſubjects more proper for painting than poetry; and in reſpect of the delineation of paſſion, a woman taken in adultery, as it exhibits the ſudden ſurprize, ſhame, and that mixture of paſſions, which ſtrictly riſes in the guilty mind, and ſhow themſelves in the face, is quite in the province of painting: Suſannah appearing to anſwer the charge of adultery gave Monſ. Coypel an opportunity of expreſſing a certain nobleneſs

of

of ſoul, an innocence and tranquillity in her countenance, which poetry could not reach. Alexander looking at his phyſician, and drinking the potion, is another of the painter's ſubjects.

3. Muſic can only imitate certain emotions and paſſions, but can give no idea of character: when uſed to raiſe thoſe affections in the mind to which its genius is adapted, it is ſuperior in its effects to either poetry or painting.

To explain this aſſertion, I ſhould obſerve, that we muſt not expect any minute diſtinctions of paſſion (as pity from benevolence, &c. &c.) in the ſeveral imitations of muſic; but if the diſturbed, unſettled, and unhappy mind is to be lulled into a placid ſerenity, neither poetry nor painting is near ſo likely to effect

it as muſic; the delicate, ſoft, tender tones of melting harmony, diſſipate even grief itſelf, and lap the ſoul into an elyſium of tranquillity *. — If the enfeebled melancholy mind is to be roufed from its low ſtate, the blood to flow with ra-

* Breathe the divine enchanting raviſhment
Of love; and in a pleaſing ſlumber lull
The ſoften'd ſenſes.

Eſt-il un art plus aimable que la muſique ? En eſt-il un qui regne plus puiſſamment & plus agréablement ſur nos ames ? Elle eleve, elle anime, elle effraye, elle touche, elle attriſte, elle égaye; elle agite avec violence, elle émeut avec douceur: Arbitre de nos paſſions, ſource perpetuelle de nos innocens plaiſirs. Les anciens peignoient la beauté accompagnée de trois graces. Sans doute, l'une ſouriоit, l'autre danſoit; & la plus aimable de toutes meloit les ſons d'un luth flatteur à une voix brillante. Socrate meme céderoit à Venus quand elle unit les accens d'Erato aux accords enchanteurs d'Euterpe. *Conſidérations ſur les Révolutions des Arts, par Metugan, p.* 232.

pidity,

pidity, the animal ſpirits to mount into the fire of ardor, anger, ambition, or any warm paſſion; ſuch alſo is the muſician's province. Let the reader recollect the effect which many of Handel's choruſes have, which cannot be heard without the greateſt emotion; particularly in Alexander's feaſt "The princes applaud with a furious joy;" and above all others the concluding chorus in the Meſſiah. If we go to theſe oratorio's in any diſpoſition of mind, however low or ſunk, their effect will appear in the ſtrongeſt manner; nor can we be maſters of our paſſions, while ſuch powerful notes almoſt tear us from ourſelves *.

Such

* It may be ſaid in the inſtances which I have quoted, that muſic in them borrows the aid of poetry; but in the moſt of the choruſes, the effect ariſes from the muſic alone; and, I am fully per-

 ſuaded

Such being the ſeveral diſtinct powers of poetry, painting and muſic, the union of the firſt and laſt will always be attended with the greateſt effects, which are then irreſiſtible; for the poetry explains thoſe little diſtinctions which muſic cannot, and giving the reader an idea of ſeveral paſſions and emotions which the muſic impreſſes, renders its force complete. The fineſt inſtances of this is, the Alexander's feaſt of the immortal Handel.

I have often thought what vaſt effects might be the reſult of theſe three arts

ſuaded, would be attended with the ſame, if there were no voices, for they are in general ſo drowned in the inſtruments, that it is difficult to diſtinguiſh the words, though they add greatly to the general harmony: never were any compoſitions greater than the two I have mentioned.

united

united with that of dancing *. If we may ſuppoſe ſuch a union to ſet off beauty in its brighteſt colours, how could the ſoul of man be proof againſt ſuch bewitching charms of beauty, motion, numbers, ſound and colours, all conſpiring at the ſame inſtant to overcome him by the warmth of their impreſſions†? Sure

* Quintilian ſays, Cum valeant multum *verba per ſe*, & *vox* propriam vim adjiciat rebus, & *geſtus motuſque* ſignificet aliquid, profecto perfectum quiddam, cum omnia coierint, fieri neceſſe eſt.

Book x.——3.

† Can there be ſuppoſed a more delightful ſituation, than that perſon, whoſe ſoul experiences at one and the ſame time the moſt lively impreſſions of painting, muſic, poetry and dancing, all united to charm it? Alas! why is ſuch a ſituation ſo ſeldom compatible with virtue?

Batteux's Principles of Lit. vol. i. p. 56.

Plutarch, ſpeaking of muſic, does not attribute any ſuch effects to it. A man, ſays he, who has

Sure that mind that could withſtand ſuch a combination of enchanting images muſt be harder than adamant. It has been often aſſerted, that the fine arts are no friends to a ſtrict virtue, but I apprehend this opinion aroſe from the looſe lives of many of their votaries; I leave it to the reader to judge, whether ſuch a union of ſoftening powers as I juſt mentioned, would be likely to impreſs on the mind of the ſpectator ſentiments of a rigid virtue, or an effeminate delicacy.

learnt muſic from his infancy, can never fail of having a taſte for what is good, and conſequently a hatred of what is bad, even in things that belong not to muſic; he will never diſhonour himſelf by any meanneſs. He will be uſeful to his country, careful in private life: all his actions and words will be governed by the rules of diſcretion, and bear the characters of decency, moderation, and order.

A warm and lively imagination is almoſt always united with warm paſſions; thoſe ſublime geniuſes, whoſe works charm the world, were never men of a warm temperature. Perhaps painting requires as warm an imagination as either of them, and the profeſſors of that charming art have many of them been men of violent paſſions. The famous Raphael died of a debauch at the age of thirty-ſeven *. Annibal Carrache's debauches at

* One day after he had abandoned himſelf to women with exceſs, he was taken very ill of a burning fever; and the phyſicians, from whom he concealed the true cauſe of his diſtemper, having dealt by him as if he had a pleuriſy, quite extinguiſhed the little fire that was left in his body. He died on the ſame day that he was born, Good-Friday, anno 1520. Cardinal Bembo wrote his epitaph, which is to be ſeen upon his tomb in the church of the

at Naples, whither he retired for the recovery of his health, brought a diſtemper upon him, of which he died in 1609. As in his life he had imitated Raphael in his works, ſo he ſeems to have copied that great maſter in the cauſe and manner of his death: it being too common, ſays an ingenious writer, for men, who excel in the fine arts, to be ſubject to the amorous paſſion. Giorgione was not exempt from it. He fell extremely in love with a young beauty at Venice, who was no leſs charmed with him, and ſubmitted to be his miſtreſs. She fell ill of the plague; but not ſuſpecting it to be ſo, admitted Giorgione to her bed, where the infection ſeizing him, they both died

Rotunda at Rome: two verſes of it are admirable.

Ille hic eſt Raphael, timuit, quo ſoſpite, vinci
Rerum magna parens, & moriente mori.

De Piles, p. 3.

in

in 1511, he being about thirty-three years of age.

Several great poets have alſo been a little remarkable for the warmth of their paſſions. Alcæus was ſo amorous (ſays Scipio Gentilis) that he compares himſelf to a hog, who whilſt he is eating one acorn, devours another with his eyes: "So is it with me (ſays he) whilſt I enjoy one girl, I am wiſhing for another." He was much addicted to the Greek vice, the love of boys. The name of his favourite was Lycus, of whom Horace ſpeaks in the following paſſage.

Qui ferox bello, tamen inter arma,
Sive jactatam religaret udo
Litore navim,
Liberum, & Muſas, Veneremque, & illi
Semper hærentem puerum canebat,
Et Lycum, nigris oculis, nigroque
Crine decorum. O decus

O decus Phœbi, & dapibus ſupremi
Grata teſtudo Jovis, O laborum
Dulce lenimen, mihi cunque ſalve
Rite vocanti.

Ode xxxii. lib. 2.

Anacreon, the Greek poet, is ſaid alſo to have been in love with the fair Cleobulus, whom he had like to have killed when a child, in the arms of his nurſe, by rudely joſtling of her as he reeled one day through the ſtreets, when he was in liquor; and not content with this he abuſed the child with ſcurrilous language: the nurſe wiſhed he might one day commend him as much as he had then abuſed him. Her wiſhes were fulfilled, for Cleobulus grew to a beautiful youth, and Anacreon falling in love with him, wrote ſeveral verſes in his praiſe.

Alcman

Alcman, a lyric poet, who flouriſhed in the 27th Olympiad, was a man of a very amorous conſtitution; he is accounted the father of love-verſes, and is ſaid to have firſt introduced the cuſtom of ſinging them in public.

To theſe few inſtances I cannot but add a very remarkable one mentioned by the duke de Sully, which ſhews a moſt admirable imagination, attended with the moſt terrible paſſions.

When that miniſter, in 1603, ſet out on an embaſſage for the court of England, he was attended by a numerous retinue of the principal gentlemen in France: amongſt the reſt Mr. Servin preſented his young ſon to him; at the ſame time earneſtly begging the duke, that he would uſe his beſt endeavours to make

make him an honeſt man. This requeſt gave Sully a great curioſity to ſearch into his character; and he gives the following ſtriking account of him.

His genius, ſays he, was ſo lively, that nothing could eſcape his penetration; his apprehenſion was ſo quick, that he underſtood every thing in an inſtant; and his memory ſo prodigious, that he never forgot any thing. He was maſter of all the branches of philoſophy, the mathematics, particularly fortification and deſigning. Nay, he was ſo thoroughly acquainted with divinity, that he was an excellent preacher, when he pleaſed, and could manage the controverſy for, or againſt the proteſtant religion, with the greateſt ability. He not only underſtood the Greek, Hebrew, and other learned languages, but all the jargons

of

of the moderns. He entered ſo exactly into their pronunciation and accent, to which he joined ſuch a perfect imitation of their air and manners, that not only the people of the different nations in Europe, but the ſeveral provinces of France, would have taken him for a native of the country. He applied his talent to imitate all ſorts of perſons, which he performed with wonderful dexterity; and was accordingly the beſt comedian in the world. He was a good poet, an excellent muſician, and ſung with equal art and ſweetneſs. He ſaid maſs; for he would do every thing, as well as know every thing. His body was perfectly proportioned to his mind. He was well made, vigorous and agile, formed for all ſorts of exerciſes. He rode a horſe well, and was admired for dancing, leaping,

ing, and wreſtling. He was acquainted with all kinds of ſports and diverſions, and could practiſe in moſt of the mathematical arts.—Reverſe the medal, ſays Sully; he was a liar, falſe, treacherous, cruel, and cowardly, a ſharper, drunkard, and glutton. He was a gameſter, an abandoned debauchee, and blaſphemer, and atheiſt. In a word, was poſſeſſed of every vice, contrary to nature, to honour, to religion, and ſociety; he perſiſted in his vices to the laſt, and fell a ſacrifice to his debaucheries, in the flower of his age. He died at the public ſtew, holding the glaſs in his hand, ſwearing and denying God.

8. And great Naſſau to Kneller's hand decreed,
To fix him graceful on the bounding ſteed.

Neither king William nor queen Mary ever ſat to any other perſon beſides Sir

Sir Godfrey Kneller; and what is more remarkable, he had the honour to draw ten crowned heads; four kings of England and three queens, the czar of Muſcovy, Charles III. king of Spain, afterwards emperor; and the French king Lewis XIV. beſides divers electors and princes: by which means his reputation became ſo univerſal, that the emperor Leopold dignified him as a nobleman and knight of the holy Roman empire, by patent; and his majeſty king George I. created him a baronet of Great Britain. He always lived in the greateſt eſteem and reputation; abounding no leſs in wealth than ſplendor; in both, far ſurpaſſing any of his predeceſſors. He ſpent the latter part of his life at Whitton, near Hampton Court, where he built a houſe after a complete manner, and furniſhed it in all reſpects accordingly.

Learn

Learn to live well, or fairly make your will ;
You've play'd and lov'd, and eat and drank your fill :
Walk ſober off, before a ſprightlier age
Comes titt'ring on, and ſhoves you from the ſtage ;
Leave ſuch to trifle with more grace and eaſe,
Whom folly pleaſes, and whoſe follies pleaſe *.

Theſe lines are extremely beautiful ; and contain an excellent leſſon for thoſe old conceited people, who are not contented with being allowed underſtanding in thoſe points, where experience confers knowledge, but muſt ape the faſhionable follies of youth, and pretend to be as knowing in what concerns the younger part of mankind, as they ought to be in what regards themſelves. Age, when it aſſumes the ſteadineſs and wiſdom of experience, is venerable ; but when it de-

* Book II. Ep. ii. verſ. 322.

viates

viates into the foibles of youth, it becomes contemptible *.

Go

* " What borrowed ornaments are theſe?" ſays Dr. Young, in an addreſs to the aged part of the female ſex. " Is vanity ſtill in its ſpring? Is the folly of hairleſs heads, putting forth its gay bloſſoms in the December of life? Age cannot drop its dignity, and yet retain its privileges. It muſt be laughed at, if it will not be revered †. To ſecure to the old that influence, which they are willing to claim, and which might ſo much contribute to the improvement of the arts of life, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that they give themſelves up to the duties of declining years; and contentedly reſign to youth its levity, its pleaſures, its frolicks, and its fopperies. It is a hopeleſs endeavour to unite the contrarieties of ſpring and winter; it is unjuſt to claim the privileges of age, and retain the playthings of childhood. The young always form magnificent ideas of the wiſdom and gravity of men, whom they conſider as placed at a diſtance

* Centaur not fabulous, vol. iv. 146.

' Go ſee Sir Robert ———

P. See Sir Robert !——hum—

And never laugh—for all my life to come ?

Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of ſocial pleaſure, ill exchang'd for pow'r ;
Seen him, unc umber'd with the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe.
Would he oblige me ? Let me only find,
He does not think me what he thinks mankind ‡.

from them in the ranks of exiſtence, and naturally look on thoſe whom they find trifling with long beards, with contempt and indignation, like that which women feel at the effeminacy of men. If dotards will contend with boys in thoſe performances, in which boys muſt always excel them ; if they will dreſs crippled limbs with embroidery, endeavour at gayety with faultering voices ; and darken the aſſemblies of pleaſure, with the ghaſtlineſs of diſeaſe, they may well expect thoſe who find their diverſions obſtructed, will hoot them away ; and if they deſcend to competition with youth, they muſt bear the inſolence of ſucceſsful rivals.

‡ Epil. to the Sat. Dial. i. ver. 27.

The

The lines are exceſſively beautiful, and poetical; but the two laſt in particular contain an exact characteriſtic of the opinion which Sir Richard Walpole had of mankind. That miniſter uſed often to declare, that every man had his price; and that although ſome men made a ſhow of patriotiſm, it did not proceed from real virtue, but the want of a ſufficient bribe. It appeared from the report of the ſecret committee for enquiring into the conduct of Robert earl of Orford, that upwards of fifty thouſand pounds were paid to authors and printers of news-papers, ſuch as Free-Britons, Daily Courants, Corn-Cutter's Journals, Gazetteers, and other political papers, from 1731 to 1741. Dr. Warburton very juſtly obſerves on this, that the benevolence of one miniſter expended, for the current dullneſs of ten years in

Britain, double the ſum which gained Lewis XIV. ſo much honour, in annual penſions to learned men all over Europe. In which, and in a much longer time, not a penſion at court, nor preferment in the church or univerſities, of any conſideration, was beſtowed on any man diſtinguiſhed for his learning, ſeparately from party-merit, or pamphlet-writing †.

Yet all the panegyrics which theſe political writers beſtowed on their patron, are now buried in oblivion: not one of them is ſo well known as this compliment of Mr. Pope's. What could induce Mr. Walpole to introduce ſtrokes of party politicks into his Catalogue of roy-

† Notes on the Dunciad, book ii. v. 314.

al

al and noble authors, I cannot conceive: they are unpardonable in a mere literary book; but particularly ſo, when they tranſgreſs the bounds of truth. "It is not proper nor neceſſary," ſays he, "for me to touch his character here. "—— Sixteen unfortunate and inglorious "years ſince his removal have already "written his elogium §."

Suppoſing that the years ſince Sir Robert Walpole's removal, were as inglorious as thoſe of his miniſtry; yet is it any apology for a bad miniſter to ſay,

§ Vol. ii. p. 138. And ſpeaking of admiral Montague, he ſays,—"It is remarkable that he was the laſt commoner who was honoured with the garter, except one man, to whoſe virtues and merit may ſome impartial pen do as much juſtice, as I have ſatisfaction in rendering to this great perſon." p. 8.

that he was ſucceeded by as great knaves as himſelf? How well the national honour of Great Britain was ſupported during his miniſtry is well known; but how could a miniſter act with becoming firmneſs in the affairs of Europe, whoſe greateſt dread was that of a war? and who would let his ſovereign and his country receive any inſults ſooner than go into one, a time in which he knew his own power would be in danger of falling. Yet, even during ſo long and peaceable an adminiſtration, the only effect that reſulted from it, was the introducing the moſt iniquitous ſcheme of government that could poſſibly be framed, ſince he laid the foundation of his power on infamy, bribery, and corruption; nor could it ſubſiſt, but at the expence of virtue, patriotiſm, probity, and honour. Mr. Pope draws a ſtriking and moſt beau-

beautiful picture of the corruptneſs of this age, in the concluſion of the firſt dialogue in the epilogue to the ſatires,

Lo! at the wheels of her ‡ triumphal car,
Old England's genius rough with many a ſcar,
Dragg'd in the duſt! his arms hang idly round,
His flag inverted trails along the ground!
Our youth all liv'ry'd o'er with foreign gold,
Before her dance; behind her crawl the old!
See throngingmillions to the pagod run,
And offer country, parent, wife, or ſon!
Hear her black trumpet thro' the land proclaim,
That *not to be corrupted is the ſhame.*
In ſoldier, churchman, patriot, man in pow'r,
'Tis av'rice all, ambition is no more;
See, all our nobles begging to be ſlaves,
See, all our fools aſpiring to be knaves.
The wit of cheats, the courage of a whore,
Are what ten thouſand envy and adore:
All, all look up with reverential awe,
At crimes that 'ſcape, or triumph o'er the law:
While truth, worth, wiſdom, daily they decry,
"Nothing is ſacred now but villainy.".

‡ Vice.

Mr. Pope's moral eſſays are all, except the Eſſay on Man, extremely well wrote ſatires. The vices and follies of the age were always laſhed by him with equal wit and judgment; and none of his pieces diſplay more beautiful paſſages than theſe eſſays.

1. Tho' the ſame ſun with all diffuſive rays,
Bluſh in the roſe, and in the di'mond blaze,
We prize the ſtronger effort of his pow'r,
And juſtly ſet the gem above the flow'r. *

No man had ever a happier way of expreſſing his ideas than Pope; he is peculiarly excellent in expreſſive epithets and metaphorical expreſſions; I hardly know a more beautiful line than the ſecond of theſe, and the poetry is not only pleaſing, but the thought juſt.

2. Search then the ruling paſſion: There alone
The wild are conſtant, and the cunning known;

* Ep. i. ver. 145.

The

The fool conſiſtent, and the falſe ſincere,
Prieſts, princes, women, no diſſemblers here.
This clue once found unravels all the reſt,
The proſpect clears, and Wharton ſtands confeſt.
Wharton, the ſcorn and wonder of our days,
Whoſe ruling paſſion was the luſt of praiſe:
Born with whate'er could win it from the wiſe,
Women and fools muſt like him, or he dies;
Tho' wond'ring ſenates hung on all he ſpoke,
The club muſt hail him maſter of the joke.
Shall parts ſo various aim at nothing new?
He'll ſhine a Tully, and a Wilmot too.
Then turns repentant, and his God adores
With the ſame ſpirit that he drinks and whores;
Enough if all around him but admire,
And now the punk applaud, and now the frier.
Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
And wanting nothing but an honeſt heart;
Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt,
And moſt contemptible to ſhun contempt;
His paſſion ſtill to covet gen'ral praiſe,
His life to forfeit it a thouſand ways;
A conſtant bounty which no friend has made;
An angel-tongue, which no man can perſuade;
A fool, with more of wit than half mankind,
Too raſh for thought, for action too refin'd:

A ty-

A tyrant to the wife his heart approves;
A rebel to the very king he loves;
He dies ſad out-caſt of each church and ſtate,
And, harder ſtill! flagitious, yet not great.
Aſk you why Wharton broke thro' ev'ry rule?
'Twas all for fear the knaves ſhould call him fool.*

This is one of thoſe maſterly characters in the drawing of which Pope excelled ſo greatly. I cannot help here quoting an anecdote that marks the vivacity and wit of this volatile duke. When he was upon his travels at Geneva, being much diſguſted with his governor, he left him at that city, and ſet out poſt for Lyons. His lordſhip, ſomewhere in his travels, had picked up a bear's cub, of which he was very fond, always carrying it about with him; but when he was determined to abandon his tutor, he left the cub behind him, with the following ad-

* Ver. 174.

dreſs,

dreſs, " Being no longer able to bear with your ill uſage, I think proper to be gone from you: however, that you may not want company, I have left you the bear, as the moſt ſuitable companion in the world that could be picked out for you."—The rambles of this celebrated man are well known; and that he had great abilities, is undiſputed. Mr. Walpole relates a curious affair that happened between the duke and Sir Robert Walpole: at the time when he made his famous ſpeech on inflicting pains and penalties on the biſhop of Rocheſter, he was in oppoſition to the court; his grace went to Chelſea the day before the laſt debate on that prelate's affair, where acting contrition, he profeſſed being determined to work out his pardon at court by ſpeaking againſt the biſhop; in order to which he begged ſome hints. The

miniſter

miniſter was deceived, and went thro' the whole cauſe with him, pointing out where the ſtrength of the argument lay, and where its weakneſs. The duke was very thankful, returned to town, paſſed the night in drinking, and without going to bed, went to the houſe of lords, where he ſpoke *for* the biſhop, recapitulating in the moſt maſterly manner, and anſwering all that had been urged againſt him. His ſpeech againſt the miniſtry two years before, on the affair of the South Sea company, had a fatal effect; earl Stanhope anſwering it with ſo much warmth, that he burſt a blood-veſſel, and died.

3. "Odious! in woollen! 'twould a ſaint provoke,
(Were the laſt words that poor Narciſſa ſpoke)
"No, let a charming chintz, and Bruſſels lace,
"Wrap my cold limbs, and ſhade my lifeleſs face;
"One

" One would not ſure be frightful when one's dead,
" And—Betty—give this cheek a little red."*

By Narciſſa is here meant the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield, who was buried with great pomp in Weſtminſter Abbey. Her corpſe lay in ſtate at the Jeruſalem chamber; adorned, at her own requeſt, with a head-dreſs of Bruſſels lace, a Holland ſhift, with tucker and double ruffles of the ſame lace, and a pair of new kid gloves.

The ſecond epiſtle on the characters of women, is one of the moſt exquiſite pieces that Pope ever wrote: it abounds with many portraits drawn with great art and judgment; that of Atoſſa is particularly excellent, and marked with thoſe ſtrokes of ridicule, that render Pope's ſatires ſo entertaining. I have been informed that by this Atoſſa is

* Ver. 246.

meant

meant the old ducheſs of Marlborough, and that her grace being informed of Pope's deſign to ſatirize her, ſent him a thouſand guineas to ward off the blow, which Pope accepted, and then inſerted her character; but this can hardly be credited.

1. Ah! friend! to dazzle let the vain deſign;
To raiſe the thought and touch the heart be thine?
That charm ſhall grow, while what fatigues the ring,
Flaunts and goes down an unregarded thing:
So when the ſun's broad beam has tir'd the ſight,
All mild aſcends the moon's more ſober light;
Serene in virgin modeſty ſhe ſhines,
And unobſerv'd the glaring orb declines. *

Theſe beautiful lines contain the fineſt advice to females to aim at being rather agreeable than dazzling; we expect in the fair ſex rather a ſoul ſoft and pleaſing, a certain calm delicacy of mind, than

* Ver. 249.

than ſtriking traits of heroic character, which are more natural in men.

2. In the worſt inn's worſt room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaiſter, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with ſtraw,
With tape-ty'd curtains never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
Where tawdry yellow ſtrove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies—alas! how chang'd from him,
That life of pleaſure, and that ſoul of whim!
Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
The bow'r of wanton Shrewſbury and love;
Or juſt as gay at council, in a ring
Of mimick'd ſtateſmen, and their merry king;
No wit to flatter, left of all his ſtore;
No fool to laugh at which he valu'd more:
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame; this lord of uſeleſs thouſands ends ‡.

The character of the duke of Buckingham, contained in theſe and the follow-

‡ Verſe, 300.

ing

ing lines, are extremely beautiful, and juſt. This lord, ſo famous for his abilities, vices, and misfortunes, made a conſiderable figure in the reign of Charles II. Dryden ſatirized him in his admirable character of Zimri; but his grace was fully revenged, as an ingenious gentleman expreſſes it, by making Dryden ſatirize himſelf. This nobleman, who had been poſſeſſed of an eſtate of 50,000 l. a year, and paſſed through many of the moſt conſiderable poſts in the kingdom, died at a remote inn in Yorkſhire, reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs.

3. And now the chapel's ſilver bell you hear,
That ſummons you to all the pride of pray'r:
Light quirks of muſic, broken and uneven,
Make the ſoul dance upon a jig to heav'n ||.

When Cannons was in all its glory, Handel compoſed for the duke of Chan-

|| Ep. iv. ver. 140.

dois's

dois's chapel, if Pope meant to ridicule the affected magnificence of that nobleman in having such a composer, his satire was ill-directed, since in this respect his conduct was really magnificent.—This whole epistle, but more particularly that part of it which satirizes the duke's want of taste, is one of the most exquisite pieces of the kind that Pope wrote; such a poet, with such an object of ridicule, could not but produce an excellent poem. 'Tis very remarkable, that prediction contained in the following lines is quite fulfilled.

Another age shall see the golden ear
Imbrown the slope, and nod on the parterre,
Deep harvests bury all his pride has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the land.

Cannons 'tis said cost upwards of two hundred thousand pounds building; and

when pulled down the materials did not fetch thirty ſix thouſand.

Mr. Pope's ſatires, it may be perceived, even from the paſſages which I have quoted, are wrote with an infinite fund of wit and ridicule; an exquiſite and penetrating knowledge of human nature; and are cloathed in ſuch a beautiful poetic ſtile, as juſtly entitles them to the firſt place amongſt the ſatyrical poems in the Engliſh language. As to the Dunciad, the merit of the poem is univerſally allowed; but unfortunately for poſterity, the ſubject has ſo little in it engaging to any other time, but that age in which it was wrote, that I cannot help regretting, that ſo fine a genius ſhould employ ſo much time and poetry in immortalizing a ſet of wretches, who,

had

had it not been for his writings, would have been long ago buried for ever in oblivion. The greateſt excellency in the Dunciad conſiſts in its mock heroics.

Dr. Young's are the next ſatires I ſhall be particular in mentioning in this eſſay. There is indeed a great falling off from Pope's to thoſe of this reverend gentleman; but as they contain ſome bright paſſages, and are wrote in the cauſe of virtue, with great goodneſs of deſign, the reader will excuſe an endeavour to point out ſome of their beauties.

1. Shall authors ſmile on ſuch illuſtrious days,
And ſatiriſe with nothing but their praiſe* ?

The ſtroke in the laſt line is very good. Pope ſomewhere ſumming up all the impudent practices of his enemies to abuſe

* Young's Works, vol. iv. p. 80. ſat. 1.

him, concludes with ſaying, " One more abuſive calls himſelf my friend."—

2. It makes dear ſelf on well bred tongues prevail,
And I the little hero of each tale *.

This ſatire is extremely juſt. How often do we hear men who diſguſt all their acquaintances by trumpeting their own praiſes? Nothing ſurely can deſtroy that freedom and eaſe which ought to reign in the converſation of friends, more than the impertinence of thoſe who think every man has nothing to attend to but their encomiums, which they beſtow on themſelves. This diſpoſition renders great abilities diſguſting; but when we find it equally predominant in thoſe who have little important to ſay for themſelves, it becomes intolerable.

* Ibid. p. 83.

3. The

3. The love of praiſe, howe'er conceal'd by art,
Reigns more or leſs, and glows in ev'ry heart:
The proud to gain it, toils on toils endure;
The modeſt ſhun it but to make it ſure ‡.

Theſe lines are pretty, and the ſentiment extremely juſt. "Praiſe, ſays the Rambler, is ſo pleaſing to the mind of man, that it is the original motive of almoſt all our actions. The deſign of commendation, as of every thing elſe, is varied indeed by innumerable differences of temper, capacity, and knowledge; ſome have no higher wiſh than for the applauſe of a club; ſome expect the acclamations of a country; and ſome have hoped to fill the mouths of all ages and nations with their names. Every man pants for the higheſt eminence within his view; none, however mean, even ſinks below the hope of being diſtinguiſh-

‡ Sat. 1.

ed

ed by his fellow beings, and very few have, by magnanimity or piety, been ſo raiſed above it, as to act wholly without regard to cenſure or opinion. *

4. Parts may be prais'd, good nature is ador'd;
Then draw your wit as ſeldom as your ſword,
And never on the weak; or you'll appear
As there no hero, no great genius here.
As in ſmooth oil the razor beſt is whet,
So wit is by politeneſs ſharpeſt ſet:
Their want of edge from their offence is ſeen;
Both pain us leaſt when exquiſitely keen. †

Theſe lines are poetic, and contain excellent advice to thoſe whoſe wit is directed by their ill-nature; and the ſimile of the razor expreſſive and juſt. Addiſon has ſomewhere in the Spectator drawn a kind of parallel between a good natural man and a wit, and has ſhown

* Rambler, vol. iv. Numb. 193.

† Sat. 2.

with

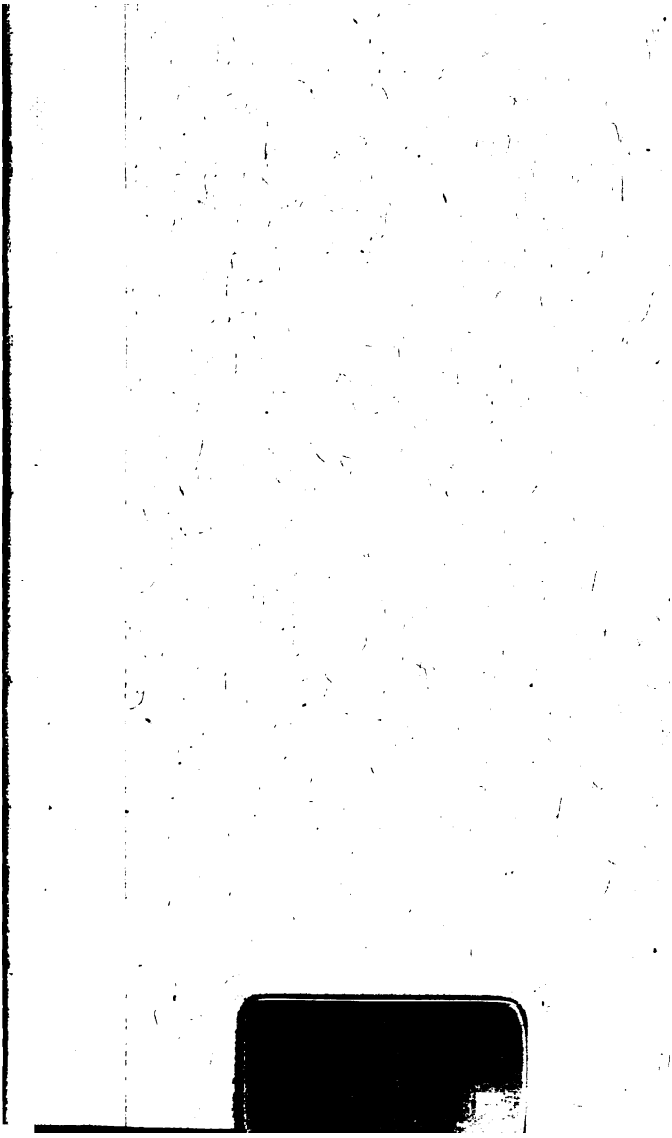
with his uſual penetration, how contemptible a figure wit muſt make when not founded in good nature. Burſts of laughter at a club may crown the cauſe of ill-natured wit; but it is too much admired to be eſteemed. Surely the man who expoſes thoſe failings in human nature which humanity ſhould teach him to throw a veil over; who laughs at vices which ought either to be excuſed or concealed, and falling indifferently upon friends or foes, expoſes the perſon who has obliged him, and in ſhort ſticks at nothing that may eſtabliſh his character of a wit; ſuch a man, I ſay, ought rather to be deteſted than admired.

5. And what ſo fooliſh as the chace of fame?
How vain the prize? How impotent our aim?
For what are men who graſp at praiſe ſublime,
But bubbles on the rapid ſtream of time?

That

That riſe and fall, that ſwell and are no more;
Born and forgot ten thouſand in an hour.*

Theſe lines are much more poetic and harmonious, and the thought better expreſſed, than is uſual in Dr. Young's poetry. The metaphor of comparing the life of man to the bubble of a ſtream, although not new, is here extremely beautiful.

* Sat. 2.

END of VOL. II. PART I.